

# MARY STUART

*A SKETCH AND A DEFENCE*









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MARY STUART

“ I will, here, in my last moments, accuse no one ; but when I am gone much will be discovered that is now hid, and the objects of those who have procured my death be more clearly disclosed to the world.”—*Words spoken by Mary Stuart on the scaffold at Fotheringay.*

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*A SKETCH, AND A DEFENCE*

BY

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## P R E F A C E .



MY object in this little book has been to present within brief compass a narrative of the earlier part of Mary Stuart's life, and also to give, as concisely as might be consistent with clearness, an account of that portion of her history immediately preceding her imprisonment in Lochleven, and over which so dark a shadow has always rested.

That shadow I have laboured to dispel. With what success the Reader must determine.

With regard to the pictorial manner in which I have endeavoured to portray the night of that memorable ninth of March, should it be charged against me that I have thereby violated the

integrity of historical narrative, I reply, that if it be the part of an historian to present, at times, a living picture to the Reader, then I have not so erred. For the mind cannot suddenly be brought to realize such a scene as the murder of Rizzio : the imagination needs to be aided by the filling in of such unrecorded details as, while they form no part of history, give to the picture that vividness and truth it would otherwise lack.

G. D.



A SHORT BIOGRAPHY  
OF  
MARY STUART,  
*FROM HER BIRTH TO  
THE MURDER OF RIZZIO.*



IN order that we may better understand the life A.D. of Mary Queen of Scots, it will be necessary for 1542 us to glance, briefly, at the position of affairs generally, in Britain and abroad, at, or about the time that this princess came into the world; and then to review, somewhat more in detail, the history of Scotland under the earlier Stuarts, that we may rightly appreciate the exceeding difficulties of the position which the ill-fated Mary was born to fill. Beginning, then, with Germany, we see that the doctrines of Luther had not only retained their original hold upon the people, but were even making further advance. And this in spite of the adverse attitude of Charles V., who now began to direct his efforts, hitherto otherwise employed, to stay this wave of doctrinal reform, which threatened to shake even his empire, and to rob him of his proud position as temporal head of Christendom.

1542 The revolt against the authority of the Pope had widely spread throughout Europe. Norway, Sweden, and Denmark had become Protestant; England, under Henry VIII., had repudiated the Papal jurisdiction; Switzerland was partly Catholic and partly Protestant; in France the Huguenots were beginning to have place; and in the Netherlands, and in Scotland, the germs of reform had for some time begun to appear. And here I wish to call attention to an important difference between the Reformation of Germany and the Reformation in England. The former was very distinctly a matter of conscience and of doctrine; the latter was a matter of policy and expediency. Indeed, the King of England did not favour any great alterations in matters of doctrine, but only wished to throw off the Pope's temporal control; and there can be no doubt but that the king's mind was also the mind of the greater part of his subjects. Probably, even to the close of Elizabeth's reign, there was a very large majority of the English who were at heart in favour of the old religion; but who, deeming that their country's

freedom depended upon its being outside the <sup>1542</sup>  
Papal jurisdiction, were content to abide by the  
religion established by law. It is important to  
remember this, as it continually bears upon the  
history of Mary Stuart.

But let us go back some hundreds of years, and  
inquire into the origin of that ancient line that  
has given England kings, and through which her  
most gracious Majesty herself derives her lineage.  
Historians tell us that there are no certain records  
of the house of Stuart until the reign of David I.,  
who was contemporary with Henry I. of England. 1100  
At that time Walter, son of Alan, appears as  
Steward of Scotland. He was known as Walter  
the Steward, or Walter Steward; whence the family  
name. The duties of the Steward seem to have  
been analogous to those of Chancellor or Prime  
Minister; so that even thus far back the Stuarts  
moved in an exalted sphere. The office became  
hereditary, and was successively held by father  
and son until Walter, the sixth High Steward, and  
one of the heroes of Bannockburn, received in mar- 1314  
riage the daughter of his sovereign. Robert, the

<sup>1314</sup> seventh Steward, and only issue of Walter and the princess, became King of Scotland, under the title of Robert II. He was succeeded by his eldest son, John, as Robert III., and thence the Stuarts reigned, in unbroken succession, until the expulsion of James VII. from the English throne. But it will be necessary for us to consider the home policy of the five kings (all bearing the name of James) <sup>to</sup> who immediately preceded Mary in the government of Scotland. The great barons had not at any time patiently brooked the restraint of monarchical sway; and, in Scotland, the sovereign had never succeeded in obtaining that power over the nobility which was possessed in England by the Tudors. These barons, many of them, had considerable forces at their disposal. The Black Douglas, alone, had upwards of twelve hundred horsemen as his usual body-guard, and was able to bring an army of forty thousand men into the field.\* The king, on the other hand, possessed neither a standing army nor financial resources, and his power over the nobles consisted merely

\* Mignet.

in the regal title, and in his ability to play off <sup>1423</sup>  
one baron against another, and thus to keep them  
in check. But James I. determined, if possible,  
to bring his nobility into greater subjection, and  
making a sudden incursion into the Highlands,  
he seized as many as forty chieftains, as an ex-  
ample to others who might be rebelliously inclined.  
He then attacked and subdued several of the  
mutinous lords, and established a second House  
of Parliament to balance the legislative power,  
which had been almost entirely in the hands of  
the nobles. But these strong measures alarmed  
the barons, who, having surprised James at Perth,  
assassinated him on the 20th of February, 1436. <sup>1436</sup>  
During the minority of his son, James II., the  
nobility recovered all their lost power; but the  
young king, when he became of age, resumed  
the policy of his father, and had succeeded in  
making great way against his turbulent vassals  
when, at twenty-nine years of age, he was killed  
by the bursting of a cannon at the siege of Rox- <sup>1460</sup>  
burgh. His son, who succeeded him as James III.,  
was left a minor just as his father had been, and

1460 like him, he too, when he became of age, resumed  
the policy of his predecessor; but not being a  
skilful ruler, he failed of his object, and being  
overcome by the barons, he was murdered by  
1488 them in the year 1488. He was succeeded by  
his son, James IV., who adopted a more concilia-  
tory tone towards the nobles, and thus probably  
saved himself from a fate similar to that which  
befell his father. But the dark destiny which has  
ever seemed to overhang this house, did not de-  
part from him. He was slain on Flodden Field  
with ten thousand of his troops; amongst whom  
were two bishops, two mitred abbots, twelve earls,  
1513 and thirteen lords. The kingdom then passed to  
his son, James V., who was under two years of  
age when he came to the throne. During this  
long minority the kingdom fell into grievous dis-  
orders, and the nobles were incessantly fighting  
amongst each other; and even in the streets of  
Edinburgh hand to hand combats were of almost  
daily occurrence. But when this king came of  
age he displayed more boldness than any of his  
ancestors had done in strengthening the power of



the crown. He seized upon the castles of the <sup>1513</sup> insurgent nobility and punished their lords; and by his rigorous administration succeeded in inspiring a universal dread of his power. But the nobles were terribly avenged. In a war which arose with England, they suffered themselves to be ignominiously defeated by a small body of English cavalry, at the battle of Solway Moss; preferring the humiliation of their king to their own honour. This disaster so wrought upon the mind of James that he died in less than a fortnight after, from sheer vexation of spirit. When he was on his death-bed in the palace of Falkland, <sup>1542</sup> the news came that a daughter was born to him; the heir to his name and to his throne. Said the king, "It came with a lass, and it will go with a lass," speaking of the crown, for it was inherited through the marriage of his ancestor, Walter, with the daughter of the king. How strangely was this prophecy fulfilled; for the child born at Linlithgow was Mary, the queen!

What a melancholy history is this of the Stuarts! How dark a destiny seems to have been theirs!

1542 An historian, speaking of James I. of England, says: "He was the first king of the ill-fated House of Stuart, and the sixth monarch of his name in Scotland. Most of his immediate predecessors died sudden or violent deaths. James I. was assassinated; James II. was killed by an accident; James III. was murdered; James IV. fell at Flodden; James V. sank broken-hearted after his defeat at Solway Moss; his father, Darnley, was blown up in the Kirk of Field; and Mary, his mother, was executed. Nor were he and his descendants less unfortunate. On more than one occasion he was in imminent danger of his life. Once from the fierce Earl of Ruthven; again from the plot to place Arabella Stuart on the throne; and again from the Gunpowder Plot. His son, Charles I., was beheaded; Charles II. passed a great part of his life a wanderer; James II. died in exile; and the rest of his descendants remained in banishment until the extinction of his house."

I have been endeavouring to show how perilous an office the kingship had proved to the five

monarchs who immediately preceded Mary on <sup>1542</sup> the Scottish throne. For more than a hundred years past the history of the country had been one long catalogue of murders and sedition, and there had been a continuous struggle for the mastery between the barons and the king; in which the former had so far got the upper hand. How ominous a future, then, seemed to await the princess who had been born to govern this turbulent realm, when her five immediate ancestors, all of them brave and strong men, had either found that government impossible, or had perished in their efforts to enforce it. And how trebly perilous would Mary's position have seemed could it have been known that, besides the already too numerous sources of strife, there was now to be added the jarring, discordant factor of religious reform. The dawn of her life had broken on a troubled sky. For a time, in its upward path, the sun shone forth from the clouds; but its zenith was obscured and dark; amid angry lightnings it declined, and sank in a crimson occident of rebellion, murder, and blood!

1542 But let us not anticipate this history. Mary,  
as we have said, was born at Linlithgow. Historians do not agree as to the exact date of her birth, but we know certainly that it was on or about the 8th of December, 1542. She was little more than a week old when her father died. Her mother was Mary of Lorraine, daughter of the Duke of Guise, and second wife of James V. It will be necessary to pass over, as briefly as possible, the events in the early life of Mary Stuart, in order that we may dwell more at length upon a later and more eventful portion of her career. A fortnight after her birth, James Hamilton, Earl of Arran, the nearest heir to the crown, was appointed Regent of Scotland. On July 1543 1st, 1543, the Regent concluded a treaty with Henry VIII., King of England, under which Mary was to be sent, when ten years of age, into England, to be subsequently married to Prince Edward, afterwards Edward VI. On September 16th of the same year, the ceremony of the coronation took place, and Mary was enthroned as queen. The object of Henry VIII. in endea-

vouring to bring about a marriage between his <sup>1543</sup>  
son and the Queen of Scots, was to unite the two  
kingdoms under the rule of the Tudors. But  
he was disappointed in his purpose, and it came  
about in this way. There were in Scotland,  
at this time, two distinct parties, known as the  
Gallican and the Anglican. The former, who  
were all Catholic, and who were headed by  
Mary of Lorraine, the queen's mother, and by  
Cardinal Beaton of St. Andrew's, desired to pre-  
vent this marriage of Mary with Prince Edward,  
who was a Protestant, and to unite her to the  
son of the King of France. The latter, or Anglican  
party, at whose head was the Earl of Arran,  
favoured the wishes of Henry VIII. But the  
Gallican party ultimately prevailed, and Mary,  
when she was six years old, was sent to France <sup>1548</sup>  
to be educated at the court of Henry II. The  
English had previously sent troops into Scotland,  
and had made several attempts to get possession  
of the person of the young queen, but had been  
unsuccessful; and even when she sailed out of  
the Firth of Clyde on her way to France, the

1548 English fleet was watching off St. Abb's Head to intercept her departure, it being thought that she would have gone from Leith. But the little princess arrived safely in the harbour of Brest, on the 13th of August, 1548, and being conducted to the court of the French king, she became, thenceforward, as one of his own children. Mary's life in France was a period of almost unbroken happiness, and we should love to linger over this, the only unclouded portion of her history. But we can but briefly dwell upon it. She had been accompanied from Scotland by four little girls, all named Mary, all about her own age, and each of them belonging to some noble family; so that the little queen and her companions came to be known as the five Maries. They were all brought up together, and these little attendants continued to wait on their queen until long after her return to Scotland. There are many interesting particulars recorded of the thirteen years that Mary spent in France. We read that at a very early age she displayed those rich and varied gifts which added so great a

charm to her noble and beautiful presence. At <sup>1555</sup>  
the age of thirteen she declaimed before the king and queen, and the whole court, a speech in Latin which she had herself composed. She was learned in history, knew several of the modern languages, was skilled in music, and composed verses that received the praise of the best critics. Moreover, she had a most thorough knowledge of Latin, which she spoke and wrote with great fluency; and in this she equalled, if she did not excel, her accomplished cousins, Elizabeth Tudor and Jane Grey. We are told that her unrivalled beauty, together with her lively and amiable disposition, made her at once the ornament and darling of the court. She was an especial favourite of the king, who would often chat with her for the space of an hour at a time. The Cardinal of Lorraine, her uncle, in writing to her mother, says: "Your daughter has so increased, and, indeed, increases daily in height, goodness, beauty, wisdom, and virtues, that she is as perfect and accomplished in all things honest and virtuous as it is possible for her to be; and there is no one like her to be

1555 found in this kingdom, either among noble ladies or others, of whatever condition or quality they may be." Mary Stuart is said to have had the most elegantly shaped hands of any lady in Europe. With respect to her great beauty we have abundant testimony, and most lovely indeed are those portraits of her, painted when she was Dauphiness of France. But probably the most beautiful representation of her that is extant, is that at Workington Hall, Cumberland. When this was painted she was in her twenty-fifth year, and indeed, the expression of this lovely face were alone sufficient to make us pause ere we too hastily adopted the harsher judgment of her character.

But we must resume her history. On the 24th 1558 of April, 1558, she was married in the cathedral of Notre Dame to Francis, eldest son of the king. She was then but little more than fifteen years of age, while her husband was some months younger than she. The marriage was celebrated with great magnificence, the Cardinal de Bourbon giving the blessing in the presence of the king, the queen, the princes of the blood, and many of the nobles.



When the ceremony was over, the young bride <sup>1558</sup> saluted her husband as King of Scotland, and her example was followed by the Scottish delegates. For several days Paris was the scene of festive rejoicings, and this youthful princess, queen of a northern clime, Dauphiness of France, and near heir to the throne of England, stood for a little space on this proud eminence. Her marriage seems to have been a very happy one, and if Francis had lived, how different a history should we have probably had to record. Seven months after this marriage died Mary, Queen of England, and was succeeded by her half-sister, Elizabeth. It will be remembered that Henry VIII., after having lived with Catherine of Arragon as his wife, for a period of eighteen years, endeavoured to obtain a divorce from her, on the ground that the marriage had been illegal, seeing that she had previously been the wife of his elder brother, Arthur, who had died. But a special dispensation from the Pope had been procured to legalise that marriage of Henry ; and, moreover, it was rendered sacred by the lapse of so long a time,

1558 during which its legality had not been called in question. Furthermore, the marriage was afterwards endorsed by the fact that Mary Tudor, the daughter of Catherine, was permitted to inherit the crown. We well know what Henry's purpose was in desiring this divorce. He had set his affections on Anne Boleyn. Failing to obtain the divorce by a process from Rome, Henry repudiated the Papal authority, and married this new object of his choice. Elizabeth was the issue of this second marriage, and the question arises which was the legal contract ; for they cannot both have been so. We have seen that Parliament endorsed the marriage with Catherine, by suffering Mary Tudor to come to the throne, when it was also open for them to choose Elizabeth. Was then Elizabeth illegitimate ? Such was the judgment generally throughout Europe ; such was the judgment of a large section of the English people ; such was the judgment of Henry II., King of France, who, on the death of Mary Tudor, urged that his daughter-in-law, the Queen of Scots, was heir to the English crown. Ill-omered claim,

for it cost Mary Stuart her life! But what was <sup>1558</sup> the Queen of Scots' claim to the English crown? It was this: her grandfather, James IV., had married Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII. James V. was the son of that pair, and Mary was the daughter of James. Thus, the Queen of Scots was great-granddaughter of Henry VII., and, Elizabeth being set aside, the true heir to the English crown. At the advice, then, of the King of France and of Mary's uncles, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Dauphin and she quartered the arms of England with those of Scotland, and thus made a mortal enemy of Elizabeth. Of the unwisdom of this step there cannot be a doubt, but we can hardly blame Mary for having acted, at the age of sixteen, by the advice of her experienced kinsmen. I say that this claiming of the English crown was unwise; I do not say it was unjust, for that appears open to grave question, from the considerations already put forth.

On the 10th of July, 1559, Henry II. of France <sup>1559</sup> was accidentally killed in a tournament, and his

1559 crown devolved upon Francis, the husband of Mary, who succeeded under the title of Francis II. ; so that the Queen of Scots was now, also, queen-consort of her husband's kingdom. But troubles were fast coming upon Mary Stuart, and on the 1560 5th of December, 1560, Francis died, and she was left a widow at the age of eighteen. [She was overwhelmed with the deepest sorrow, and for several weeks she shut herself up in her room, and would see no one but her nearest relatives. She had been deeply attached to her husband, and the short period of their wedded life (two years and eight months) had been supremely happy. It now became necessary that Mary should return to Scotland, to assume the government there in her own person. She accordingly made application to Elizabeth to grant her a safe conduct through England ; but this was refused her. Mary Stuart was deeply wounded. Speaking to Throckmorton, Elizabeth's envoy, she said : " There is nothing, Mr. Ambassador, doth grieve me more, than that 1561 I did so forget myself as to require of the queen, your mistress, that favour which I had no need to

ask. But let your mistress think that it will be deemed very strange amongst all princes and countries that she should impeach my going into my own kingdom." At a subsequent interview with Throckmorton, and shortly before her departure, she spoke to him thus : " I trust the wind will be so favourable as I shall not need to come on the coast of England ; and if I do, then, Mr. Ambassador, the queen, your mistress, shall have me in her power to do her will of me ; and if she be so hard-hearted as to desire my death, she may then do her pleasure and make sacrifice of me. Peradventure that casualty might be better for me than to live. In this matter, God's will be fulfilled." Strange that she should thus have foreshadowed her melancholy end ! 1561

On the 14th of August, 1561, she set sail for Scotland. One of the gentlemen who accompanied her in her train has given us this account of her demeanour as she was leaving behind the shores of her beloved France. " She, with both arms resting on the poop of the galley, near the helm, began to shed floods of tears, continually

1561 casting her beautiful eyes towards the port and the country she had left, and uttering these mournful words, 'Farewell, France!' until night began to fall. She desired to go to bed without taking any food, and would not go down into her cabin; so her couch was prepared on the deck. She commanded the steersman, as soon as it was day, if he could still discern the coast of France, to wake her, and not fear to call her; in which fortune favoured her, for the wind having ceased, and recourse being had to the oars, very little progress was made during the night; so that, when day appeared, the coast of France was still visible, and the steersman not having failed to perform the commands which she had given him, she sat up in her couch, and began again to look at France as long as she could; and then she redoubled her lamentations, 'Farewell, France! Farewell, France! I think I shall never see thee more.'"

It is a sorrowful picture. And when night again came on, and she was far out on the lonely sea; when there was no sound, save to tell that the craft held on its northern way, what dark forebodings

came upon her then ! But the future was hidden, <sup>1561</sup>  
and Mercy's hand had drawn the veil ; else, surely,  
would she have called on those black waters to  
cover her, and the sea to hide her from view. Bound <sup>N 13</sup>  
for a bleak and half barbaric realm, what awaited her  
there ? Sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion ;  
battle and murder, and sudden death !

Those beautiful lines of Sheriff Bell are familiar  
to us all :—

“ . . . . It was a bark that slowly held its way,  
And on its lee the coast of France, in light of evening lay ;  
And on the deck a lady sat, who gazed with tearful eyes  
Upon the fast receding hills, that dim and distant rise.  
No marvel that the lady wept, 'twas there that she had  
known  
The tranquil convent's hushed repose, the splendours of a  
throne.  
No marvel that the lady wept—it was the land of France,  
The chosen home of chivalry, the garden of romance !  
The past was bright, like those dear hills so far behind her  
bark ;  
The future, like the gathering night, was ominous and  
dark ! ”

But we must consider, for a moment, how affairs  
had gone in Scotland during the queen's absence.  
The Earl of Arran had been succeeded in the

1561 regency by Mary of Lorraine. Under her governance a protracted struggle had been carried on between the Catholics and the Protestants, which had ended in the deposition of the regent, the overthrow of Catholicism as the State religion, and the formal establishment of Protestantism. Mary of Lorraine died in June, 1560, and the government, in the absence of the sovereign, had fallen entirely into the hands of Parliament. The religious changes had been effected principally through the dauntless and unwearied exertions of John Knox. This bold reformer was a disciple of Calvin, whom he is said to have equalled in inflexibility and surpassed in energy. Chiefly to his influence is to be ascribed the greater thoroughness which characterized the Scottish Reformation as compared with that of England. He seems to have impressed the Presbyterian Church of the north with his own uncompromising hardness, and to have bequeathed this to it as an undying heritage. Possessed of courage altogether invincible, inspired with zeal that had apparently no limit, having a consummate knowledge of the



Scriptures, and endowed with commanding elo-<sup>1561</sup>  
quence, this extraordinary man played such a part in the history of these times, as probably no one else could have sustained. By his advice the Protestant barons and gentlemen, during the period that their religion was proscribed by law, had entered into a covenant together to practise their faith openly, and openly to denounce Catholicism; and thus had been formed that celebrated insurrectionary government, known as the "Lords of the Congregation." At the head of this party was the Lord James Stuart, and as he plays a most prominent part in the history of these times, he demands our special attention. He was an illegitimate son of James V., his mother being the Lady Margaret Erskine, daughter of the Earl of Mar. Thus, he was half-brother to the queen, and he was ten years her senior. His presence was most distinguished and royal, and he inherited the courage and ability of his kingly ancestors. Sir Walter Scott, speaking of him as regent, which he afterwards became, says: "This distinguished statesman—for as such his worst

1561 enemies acknowledged him—possessed all the external dignity as well as almost all the noble qualities which could grace the power that he enjoyed; and had he succeeded to the throne as his legitimate inheritance, it is probable he would have been recorded as one of Scotland's wisest and greatest kings." The Lord James was, moreover, animated by a restless ambition, and although not devoid of a certain rectitude of character, he was pitiless and without scruple in the attainment of his ends. It was natural that such a man, in reflecting on his sinister position, should inwardly chafe at what he might regard as the mere convention that excluded him from the throne. His father's eldest son, and fitted both by nature and education to fill his father's place, why should he not inherit the ancestral crown? And who stood in his way? A child of a girl, who had lived nearly all her life abroad; a stranger to Scotland and its people, and whose sympathies and predilections were entirely French. Was it justice that this kingdom, over which no woman had ever yet reigned, should now descend

to her? Thus would Mary's brother not un-<sup>1561</sup>  
naturally have reasoned within himself; thus,  
doubtless, he did reason, until at last, perhaps,  
he almost persuaded himself that he was an  
injured man, and debarred from his lawful heritage.

It was, then, in this nobleman that Mary was  
now to confide. His position in the State, and  
his royal descent alike fitted him for the office  
of her counsellor; and the queen had, as yet,  
no cause to suspect his integrity. The aspect of  
affairs was not promising. And we must not lose  
sight of this—that Mary, a zealous Catholic, was  
about to govern a land that now was not merely  
Protestant, but in which there was no toleration  
for her own religion. The reformers had enacted  
terrible penalties against all who should attempt  
either to celebrate mass, or attend it. For the first  
offence the punishment was confiscation of property;  
for the second, banishment; and for the third, death.

But let us return to the little fleet that is  
bringing the queen to her native realm. Two  
galleys had been fitted out for the service of Mary  
and her retinue, and four French ships of war

1561 accompanied her as her convoy. Nor was this a needless precaution, for Elizabeth had sent out her cruisers to endeavour to intercept and capture the Scottish queen; and Mary was thus exposed to precisely the same danger as had threatened her on her voyage to France. She was attended by six score of nobles and gentlemen, amongst whom were marshals, poets, and historians. There was also a numerous company of ladies in her train, and the same four Maries who had come with her from Scotland, now returned with her. Moreover, there were in the galleys two doctors of medicine, and a doctor of theology.

The danger from Elizabeth proved to be a real one, for the English captured one of the ships belonging to Mary's convoy, and took all who were on board prisoners. Amongst these was the Earl of Eglintoun, and other persons of rank; but they were afterwards released with an apology for their detention, as they were not the prey Elizabeth was in quest of. Mary's vessel is said to have escaped by reason of its greater speed, for being a light craft, it was equipped with oars,

which did good service in its flight before the English cruisers. The poor galley-slaves, who were chained to the oars, worked with a good will ; for Mary, on coming on board and seeing them there, although it was out of her power to release them, had spoken kindly to them, and had commanded that no one should strike them. Mary was truly royal, and was always gracious to her inferiors, however low their condition might be ; and to those who accuse her of black crimes, it must appear a somewhat strange thing that all who at any time served her, all who were around her, and who knew her disposition,—all loved her, and many of them were ready at any time to die, if by so doing they could have served her cause. And when, in later years, she had fallen under the power of the English queen,—when she was a captive in a hostile land, noble ladies and gentlemen begged it as the greatest favour that could be granted them, that they might be permitted to share her captivity, and be the partakers of her troubles. This is no fictitious colouring. I speak what are undoubted facts.

1561 Mary's escape from the English was facilitated by a dense fog which came on, and soon hid her vessel from the enemy's view. The fog, when they drew near to Scotland, was so thick that those in the prow could not see the stern. The pilots were anxiously on the look-out for the beacon-lights along the shore, but Châtelar, a poet and cavalier, and one of Mary's most ardent admirers, exclaimed, "What need of beacon-lights have we to guide us over the dark waves, when we have the starry eyes of this fair queen, whose heavenly beams irradiate both sea and land, and brighten all they shine upon?" But when the fog cleared off, it appeared that they had narrowly escaped the rocks, and had been in as great danger from this source as from the ships of Elizabeth. That queen was so much vexed that her rival had evaded her, that a certain noble lady who ventured to express her joy at Mary's safe passage, was forthwith arrested and placed in the Tower.

On the 19th of August Queen Mary entered the harbour of Leith, after having been on the

sea for five days. When the news of her arrival <sup>1561</sup> became known, the inhabitants of Edinburgh flocked in great numbers to greet their queen, and the nobles assembled to conduct her to Holyrood House, the palace of the Scottish kings.

But a deep melancholy had come upon the queen, and her courtiers saw that the unbidden tears were stealing down her cheek. She was on the threshold of a new career, and her quick perception told her that the path she had entered on was a perilous one. And nurtured as she had been, in the land of sunny France, the darling of its brilliant court, and surrounded by all the luxury the western world could give—to her the cold, sterile aspect of the northern capital was cheerless and sad, for it was a dark and sunless day, and Edinburgh was enveloped in mist. Cheerless and sad? Auld Reekie, High Dunedin! when on the morrow thou shalt roll off thy vapoury pall, and the sun shall shine on thy stately towers; when the light of morning shall reveal thy lofty gables and thy many-storeyed streets; when thy lovely mistress shall view thee from the Craggs, and

1561 look on the far-winding Forth ; when at her feet  
she shall see the palace of thy kings, and before  
her, thy glorious castle rising 'gainst the sky, then  
she will not call thee sad !

John Knox, speaking of the dense mists that prevailed when Mary arrived in Scotland, says, they showed "what comfort was brought into this country with her ; to wit, sorrow, dolour, darkness, and all impiety." Charitable Knox !

In the evening—that is, her first evening at Holyrood—the citizens of Edinburgh came beneath the palace windows, and began to play on discordant instruments, and to sing psalms, to show their joy at their queen's return. This kind of serenading, quite new to the ladies from France, excited their mirth ; and one of them said slyly to the queen, "If any one be merry, let him sing psalms." But Mary appreciated the kind intentions of her subjects, and sent messages to the citizens, saying how gratified she was by their music, and desiring that it might be repeated another night. Accordingly, for several successive evenings these dolorous sounds continued



to cheer Mary and her fastidious courtiers; but <sup>1561</sup> the queen is said to have migrated to a more remote portion of the palace.

“Difficulties,” says Mignet, “and all of them of a very serious nature, beset the path of Mary Stuart in Scotland. How should she treat with triumphant Protestantism? How should she maintain in union and reduce to obedience her nobility, so long accustomed to division and revolt? How should she live in harmony with Queen Elizabeth, her powerful neighbour and enemy at heart? And, finally, how should she marry again without endangering her crown if she espoused a foreign prince, and disturbing the peace of her kingdom if she bestowed her hand upon one of her own subjects?” Her first act was to appoint Lord James Stuart her prime minister, and Lord Lethington her secretary of State. This was apparently a wise step, as these nobles were, both of them, prominent leaders of the Protestant party; and Mary had determined not to disturb the established religion at present, as she saw that the great majority of her subjects were in favour of the

1561 reformed faith. Retrograde legislation on that matter would indeed have been exceedingly dangerous, if not altogether impossible; so strong was the anti-Catholic feeling at this time. One mass, said Knox, was more fearful to him than if ten thousand armed enemies were landed in any part of the kingdom. Mary expected that the same toleration which she showed towards others who differed from her in matters of religion would be extended to her in the exercise of her own faith. But in this she was mistaken. A most extraordinary scene took place on the very Sunday morning after her arrival. Her priests were celebrating mass in the private chapel adjoining the palace. The congregation was composed of the queen, the ladies and gentlemen of her court, and the servants of the household. The priests were in the midst of the ceremony, when suddenly, and afar off, was heard the sound as of a great multitude sending angry shouts upon the air. Indistinct, commingled, was the cry; yet even from the distance the notes of rage could be discerned, as, swelling tumultuously, they penetrated into the

church, striking terror into the minds of the wor-<sup>1561</sup>shippers. The sounds drew nearer, and now could be distinctly heard the hoarse voices of the mob, shouting, "Down with the mass! down with the idol! the idolatrous priests shall die the death!" The clergymen trembled and paused in their office: the queen was pale and agitated. Now there is a lull in the tumult: within the chapel it is a nervous stillness. Again come the shouts in terrible nearness. The mob is at the palace gates.

At this moment the Master of Lindsay, clad in mail, and followed by a troop of his men, rushed into the courtyard, and shouting, "Death to the priests! death to the priests!" would assuredly have burst into the chapel and slain his victims at the altar, had he not received a very decisive and unlooked for check. The Lord James Stuart, who had apprehended some such disturbance, had taken up his position at the door of the chapel; and he now opposed himself to the fanatical Lindsay, and by his authority stayed the tumult and dispersed the mob. He was determined that the queen should, at least, not be molested in her

1561 own chapel. An ominous Sabbath, this! It was the beginning of Mary's troubles.

Very shortly after her return to Scotland, the queen took the bold step of summoning to her presence the redoubtable reformer, John Knox. This first meeting was a remarkable one. The Protestant leader was at this time in his prime, being about fifty-six years of age. Mary was eighteen. Young and beautiful, did she think it was reserved for her to discover that Knox had a vein of chivalry in him? Some such thought may have crossed her mind; but Mary was skilled in disputation, and more than once in the course of the interview she put the reformer on his defence.

See—her Majesty is seated in the dusky audience-chamber at Holyrood. She is attended only by her brother, the Lord James. The great preacher is announced, and his sombre figure darkens the doorway. He passes the threshold, moving towards the queen; and much as Shylock takes his stand before the duke, so Knox, sullen and undaunted, pauses a little space from the throne, and with the slightest possible inclination

of the head, awaits the address of his sovereign. 1561  
After some preliminaries, Mary attacked the re-  
former on the subject of his book entitled, "The  
First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous  
Regiment of Women," in which he had argued  
that female government was not lawful. She ad-  
monished him that by such publications he was  
inciting the people to rebel against her authority.  
Knox made an evasive answer. "If, madam," said  
he, "to rebuke idolatry and to persuade the people  
to worship God according to His Word, be to raise  
subjects against their princes, I cannot stand ex-  
cused, for so have I acted; but if the true know-  
ledge of God, and His right worship lead all good  
subjects to obey the prince from their heart, then,  
who can reprehend me?" He then declared that  
he was willing to live content under her Majesty's  
government, so long as the blood of the saints  
was not shed; but maintained that in matters of  
religion, subjects were bound to obey, not the  
sovereign, but God Himself. "For if," said he, "all  
men, in the days of the apostles, should have been  
compelled to follow the religion of the Roman

1561 Emperors, where would have been the Christian faith?" "But," said the queen, "these men did not resist." "And yet," replied Knox, "those who obey not the commandment may be said to resist." "Nay," answered Mary, "but they did not resist with the sword." "That," said Knox, "was because they had not the power." "What!" exclaimed the queen, "do you say that subjects, having power, may resist their princes?" "Assuredly, madam," replied he, "if princes exceed their bounds." Mary seemed to have no power to reply, for as Knox himself tells us, "she stood, as it were, amazed for more than a quarter of an hour." At length she said: "Well, then, I perceive that my subjects shall only obey you, and not me;—they must do what they list, and not what I command; whilst I must learn to be subject unto them, and not they to me." Knox forsook his position. "God forbid," said he, "that it should ever be so. Far be it from me to command any, or to absolve subjects from their lawful allegiance. My only desire is, that both princes and subjects should obey God, who has, in His Word, enjoined kings to be nursing-

fathers, and queens nursing-mothers to His Church.” <sup>1561</sup>  
Then Mary said: “Yea, that is indeed true; but  
yours is not the Church that I will nourish. I will  
defend the Church of Rome, for I think it is the  
true Church of God.” Then came the storm, and  
the reformer burst out into terrible invectives  
against the adverse faith, declaring that the Roman  
Church had more grievously degenerated than the  
Church of the Jews, when they crucified Christ.  
When his wrath was expended he withdrew,  
shaking, as it were, the dust from off his feet.  
Knox was blamed even by the Protestant leaders  
for his manner of dealing with the queen. Lord  
Lethington writes thus to Cecil, Elizabeth’s minis-  
ter: “You know the vehemence of Mr. Knox’s  
spirit, which cannot be bridled; and yet doth  
sometimes utter such sentences as cannot be easily  
digested by a weak stomach. I could wish he  
would deal with her more gently, being a young  
princess unpersuaded.”

The four years that succeeded Mary’s return <sup>1561</sup>  
from France we must discuss as briefly as possible, <sup>to</sup>  
as our limits are somewhat confined. During this <sup>1565</sup>

1561 time her reign was comparatively peaceful, though  
to  
1565 we read how she herself, at the head of her troops,  
marched against her rebellious nobles of the north,  
traversing the country on horseback, enduring all  
manner of fatigues, and regretting "that she was  
not a man, to know what life it was to lie all night  
in the fields; or to walk upon the causeway, with  
a jack and knapsack, a Glasgow buckler, and a  
broadsword." The Lord James she presently  
created Earl of Mar, and, shortly afterwards, Earl  
of Moray. So far, that nobleman seemed to serve  
her with devoted loyalty.

Much we read of the gaiety of her court at this  
period; and the Presbyterian clergy were severely  
shocked by what they considered the unholy levity  
of the queen and her ladies. The dancing was  
especially offensive to these rigid censors, and  
called forth a remark from Knox, that no good  
had ever come of that pastime since the days of  
Herodias. There is a very interesting letter from  
Randolph to Queen Elizabeth, throwing light on  
the manner in which Mary spent her time of re-  
laxation. Randolph was Queen Elizabeth's am-



bassador at the court of Scotland, and having <sup>1564</sup> business from his mistress to communicate to Mary, he repaired to St. Andrew's, whither the Scottish queen had retired for a few days to be rid of the cares of State. I will quote Randolph's own words to Elizabeth. He says: "So soon as time served, I did present your Majesty's letter, which being read, and, as appeared on her countenance, very well liked, she said little to me for that time. The next day she passed wholly in mirth, nor gave any appearance to any of the contrary; nor would not, as she said openly, but be quiet and merry. Her will was, that for the time that I did tarry, I should dine and sup with her. Having in this sort continued with her Grace for three days, I thought it time to utter that which I had received in command from your Majesty. But I had no sooner spoken than she said: 'Now I see well that you are weary of this company and treatment. I sent for you to be merry, and to see how like a burgess's wife I live, with my little troop; and you will interrupt our pastime with your great and grave matters. I pray you, sir, if you be weary here, return home

1564 to Edinburgh, and keep your gravity and great embassy until the queen come thither; for I assure you you shall not get her here. I would not that you should think that I am she at St. Andrew's that I was at Holyrood.'"

But although Mary was thus, at times, wholly given to pleasure—as, indeed, was consistent with her youth—she was most industrious in affairs of State, and frequently exhibited a force of energy that was truly astonishing. She was also, as is well known, both industrious and very skilful with her needle, and many specimens of her embroidery are preserved to the present day.

1563 But in dealing with this time, it is impossible to pass over the romantic story of Châtelar, one of the gentlemen who had come with Mary from France. Accomplished and handsome, he was a great favourite of the queen; and Brantôme tells us that he would compose verses and address them to Mary, and that she would reply by others. It appears that the young queen, in common with her sex generally, was fond of being admired; and there is no doubt that, in a manner, she encouraged the

gallantry of Châtelar. We are told, indeed, that <sup>1563</sup> she would sometimes lean upon his shoulder, and was not careful to conceal her fondness for him. But who tells us this? John Knox. How did he obtain his knowledge? By a system of spies about the palace. Of the credence to be given to such testimony, I leave the reader to judge. I do not impeach the veracity of Knox, but I repudiate the source of his information. What followed, indeed, shows how free the queen was from that which her enemies would put upon her. Châtelar's passion for Mary seems quite to have intoxicated him, and it is difficult to believe that he was altogether in his senses at this time. Let those who wish read the story for themselves. I will only say that he so offended the queen that she bade him quit the court for ever. But, far from obeying her commands, he repeated the offence, and was then delivered over to the judges, who sentenced him to be beheaded. The block had small terror for him. His only trouble was the scorn of the queen. Rejecting spiritual aid, he walked to the scaffold reciting in French a hymn to

1563 Death. As he was about to die, he turned his eyes in the direction in which he supposed Mary to be, exclaiming as he did so, "Adieu, loveliest but most cruel princess in the world!" So perished Châtelar. Not always, then, do the brave deserve the fair!

We shall not be able to notice at any length the elaborate negotiations entered into with respect to Mary's second marriage. Many suitors had desired her hand, and she had successively rejected the Kings of Sweden and Denmark, the Earl of Arran, and the Dukes of Nemours and Ferrara. Her own choice had inclined towards Don Carlos, the eldest son of Philip II. of Spain; but that project had been frustrated. Mary then declared herself willing to be guided in the matter by 1564 Elizabeth, who suggested as a husband, Lord Robert Dudley, her own favourite. This extraordinary proposition it is not easy to explain. That Elizabeth was serious is not probable. Her motive seems to have been merely to delay matters, and to postpone the marriage indefinitely. She was anxious, if possible, to keep Mary in the same state of singleness which she had chosen for herself.

And her reason for this is obvious. If Mary were <sup>1564</sup>  
to have children, her claim on the English succession would be strengthened; and Elizabeth was already sufficiently jealous of her rival. The proposition that Mary should marry Don Carlos had excited the strenuous opposition of Knox, who inveighed against it from the pulpit, declaring that those who favoured a project to unite the queen with a Catholic prince, did all in their power to banish true religion from the realm. When Mary heard of the manner in which Knox had spoken, she sent for him again, and demanded to know what her marriage had to do with him, and why he had dared to make it the subject of a public discourse. Knox replied that he must obey the commands of God "to speak plain, and flatter no flesh." This interview proved as stormy as the first she had had with him, and it was terminated by the queen's desiring him to leave her presence. As he retired through the ante-chambers he had to pass through the midst of a number of young ladies of the court, who were there assembled, bedizened in brilliant fashion. But the reformer was not abashed. Turning his regard

1564 on either hand, he thus addressed them: "Ah! fair ladies," said he, "how pleasant were this life of yours, if it should ever abide, and then in the end we might pass to heaven with this gear! But fie on that knave, Death, that will come, whether ye will or not; and when he hath laid on the arrest, then foul worms will be busy with this flesh, be it never so fair and tender; and the silly soul, I fear, shall be so feeble, that it can neither carry with it gold, garnishing, targating, pearl, nor precious stones."

1565 About this time there came into Scotland, Henry, Lord Darnley, eldest son of the Earl of Lennox. Darnley was directly descended from Henry VII., his mother being the daughter of Margaret Tudor, by her second husband, Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus. The Earl of Lennox was himself a member of the house of Stuart, so that Darnley was nearly allied to the crown, both in Scotland and England. This young nobleman was now about nineteen years of age. He was tall and exceedingly handsome, and when he appeared at the Court of Scotland, he at once made a very favour-

able impression on the queen. His visit to the north was brought about by his mother, the Countess of Lennox, who had previously written to Mary, suggesting that she should take him as her husband. To this proposition the Scottish queen was by no means disinclined, for Darnley had much to recommend him. Bearing the name of Stuart, and, after Mary, the next heir to the crown, he was, like her, a zealous Catholic; and the queen perceived that by a marriage with him she would very greatly strengthen her own claims on the throne of England. She was, moreover, personally, very strongly disposed to the match; for Darnley seems, from the first, to have entirely won her affections. But the difficulties in the way of such a marriage were both many and formidable; and these let us now consider. When Francis II. died, Mary Stuart had ceased to bear the arms of England, and had thus removed the chief cause of enmity between herself and Elizabeth; but she did not resign her claim as heir, after Elizabeth, to the English throne. Indeed, her right to the succession was so manifest that it was openly ad- 1565

1565 mitted by almost all, and, tacitly, even by Elizabeth herself. But this queen had an invincible repugnance to appoint her own successor, and although continually urged by her ministers to do so, she was ever putting the matter off. Thus, when she suggested that Mary should marry Lord Robert Dudley, it was demanded of her, as a condition of Mary's compliance, that she should recognize the Scottish queen as her heir. But Elizabeth's reply was, "Let the marriage first take place—then that matter shall be settled." Mary, who had been willing to accept Elizabeth's proposal with respect to the Lord Robert, if her conditions were agreed to, then broke off the negotiations, rightly rejecting so disproportionate a union, unless some adequate advantage were added. Elizabeth, really, meant neither to acknowledge the succession nor to permit the marriage with Dudley. She, according to her usual custom, had adopted a shuffling policy, and merely wished to gain time; it being to her interest, as we have said, that Mary should remain single. It was about the time that these negotiations with Dudley were pending, and when the



English queen feared that an arrangement might possibly be come to, that she gave Darnley permission to go into Scotland, being aware of the ambitious designs of his mother, and doubtless thinking that this youth might now be used to prevent the marriage with Dudley, just as she had previously used Dudley to prevent Mary's union with any of the continental princes. She wished to connive at the pretensions of Darnley, and even, up to a certain point, to favour them; but she had no intention of giving her consent to a match so fraught with danger to herself. But Mary, weary of Elizabeth's tergiversation, and, moreover, becoming deeply attached to Darnley, determined to take this matter of her marriage into her own hands, and to follow her natural inclinations, even at the risk of again incurring the English queen's enmity. She accordingly signified her intention to marry Darnley; and then commenced a struggle between the two factions who supported the rival claims of Dudley and the son of Lennox. On the side of the former were Lethington, the Earl of Moray, and the lords of

1565 the congregation; on the side of the latter, the Earl of Athol, all the barons who had remained Catholic, and an Italian named David Rizzio, the queen's French secretary. The greater strength did not seem on the side of Mary, and, moreover, the whole body of the Presbyterian clergy strenuously opposed her marriage with a Catholic, as they rightly deemed that such a step would strike a blow at their religion. Elizabeth, too, when she heard how affairs were going, directed Throckmorton, her ambassador, to hasten to Scotland, and use all possible means to prevent the match. But she was too late. Mary was determined to proceed, in spite of all opposition. She first gained over Lethington to her side, and then attempted to win Moray. But her brother was inexorable, and would not yield. He grounded his opposition to the marriage upon the evil which he said would result to the established religion; but in truth he saw in it his own downfall; for Darnley was not well-disposed towards him. The queen, angered by his refusal to aid her, at length seemed to guess at his ambitious designs. "I see,

clearly," said she, "whereabout he goes ; he would 1565  
set the crown upon his own head."

When Elizabeth saw that the marriage was inevitable, she gave expression to her rage by sending the Countess of Lennox to the Tower. She then sent her mandate to Darnley and his father, bidding them, on their allegiance as English subjects, at once return to her court. Lennox refused to obey, saying that his wife was made prisoner, and that he himself was not assured of safety. Darnley replied that he now acknowledged obedience only to the Queen of Scotland ; that he found himself very well where he was, and there purposed to remain.

Anticipating evil from her brother, Mary had recalled from banishment the Earl of Bothwell. This nobleman was Moray's personal enemy, and had been compelled by him to live in exile for several years. The queen's purpose in this, was to use Bothwell, if necessary, against her brother, and thus keep his ambition in check.

Moray now threw off the mask. In alliance with the Earls of Argyll and Arran, the Lord

1565 Boyd, and other noblemen, he formed a plot to seize the queen and Darnley, as they rode from Perth to Callander. Darnley was either to be killed or delivered up to Elizabeth, Mary was to be imprisoned in Lochleven, and Moray was to resume his position as head of the government. But the conspirators were thwarted in their designs. The queen, apprised of the plot, left Perth suddenly, passed the place fixed on for the attack two hours before Argyll and his men came up, and reached Callander without mishap. Baffled in his secret machinations, Moray resorted to open revolt, and summoned the "brethren," as he called them, to arms. Mary replied by calling on all true subjects to meet her forthwith at Edinburgh, with provisions, and in arms. Feeling that delay was inexpedient, and wishing to remove the cause of opposition, she hurried on her marriage with Darnley. This took place in the private chapel at Holyrood, on Sunday, the 29th of July, 1565. The rites were according to the Church of Rome, and the ceremony was performed at the early hour of six in the morning. Mary now took the

field against Moray, and drove him from Stirling <sup>1565</sup> to Glasgow, and from Glasgow into the lands of Argyll. Elizabeth aided the insurgents by sending them money; and Moray and his confederates, having got together a thousand men, marched upon Edinburgh. They supposed that the inhabitants would have risen in their favour, but they were fired on by the cannon of the castle. Dismayed at this reception, they sent to beg Elizabeth to send them three thousand men; but Mary gave them no time to recruit. At the head of her troops she drove them from Edinburgh, and compelled them to fall back on the English frontier. Her enemies were now, for a time, quelled, and Mary herself was at the height of her popularity.

The marriage with Darnley had converted Elizabeth from a covert, into an open enemy; and from this time forward the English queen continued to labour the downfall of her rival, fomenting discontent and rebellion in her kingdom—sometimes by undisguised hostility; oftener by secret intrigue—leaving nothing undone that might

1565 qualify Mary's good name ; forgetting nothing that might bring her to destruction. Well does Mr. Froude say, that to clear the character of Mary Stuart, we must deeply criminate Elizabeth and her ministers : we shall see whether the English Court was so immaculate as to be above suspicion.

The married life of Darnley and the queen was, for a few months, exceedingly happy ; but experience soon showed that Mary had formed too high an estimate of her husband's character. He began, before long, to abandon himself to dissolute habits ; he became haughty and overbearing to those around him, and frequently treated even the queen herself with marked disrespect. He was naturally of a vain and weak disposition, and his sudden exaltation seems quite to have overbalanced him. We even find the Earl of Lennox, his father, addressing him in his letters as " Your Majesty," a sufficient commentary on the imperious nature of the son. Mary, indeed, had conferred the title of king upon Darnley the day before their marriage, and had promised him the crown

matrimonial, by which he would have had an <sup>1565</sup>  
equal share in the government ; but this she afterwards withheld, judging that power would not be safe in his hands. That the queen was wise in this we cannot doubt, when we read of the manner in which Darnley comported himself. Drury, who represented the English at Berwick, thus writes to Cecil, on the 16th of February, 1566 : " All people say that Darnley is too much addicted to drinking." The letter goes on to say that the queen having remonstrated with him on his conduct, he <sup>1566</sup>  
used such language towards her that she left the place in tears.

Again, in a letter from Randolph to Cecil, dated three weeks earlier, we find these words : " Darnley is of an insolent, imperious temper, and thinks that he is never sufficiently honoured." Under such a condition of things, it is not wonderful that Mary's affection for her husband rapidly cooled. She avoided his society, and was in no way careful to conceal, even from the outer world, the change in her regard. The orders in council, which at first had been signed both by the

1566 king and queen, were now subscribed by Mary alone.

Darnley, often too intoxicated to attend to affairs, stormed when his signature was dispensed with ; and so things went on, the breach growing daily wider, and the quarrel, which was to prove the destruction of both, fast hastening to a climax.

I have already alluded to the French secretary, David Rizzio. This man was the son of an Italian dancing and music-master. He had come to Edinburgh in the year 1562, in the suite of the ambassador from Savoy. Of a deformed and ill-favoured exterior he was possessed of great ability, and manifested a degree of mental culture at that time unusual in the Court of Scotland. We are told that he was an accomplished musician, and an adept in the art of mimicry, with the display of which he would sometimes entertain the queen and her ladies. When his master, the ambassador, returned to Piedmont, Mary had retained Rizzio as a *valet de chambre* ; but soon perceiving that he was fitted for some more honourable office, she had, in December, 1564, made him the secretary for her French correspondence. He discharged his duties



so well in this capacity that he rose high in the <sup>1566</sup> queen's estimation, and it was her purpose soon to confer additional honours upon him. The exaltation of the low-born Italian caused great discontent among the native nobility, and their aversion to the secretary was not lessened by the manner of Rizzio's deportment. He was foolish enough to adopt a lofty tone towards these haughty barons, many of whom dated their pedigrees from before the Christian era. He assumed great state in his appointments, and drove an equipage equal to the king's. Darnley had been at first on very friendly terms with Rizzio, but certain of the nobles, being desirous to avenge themselves on the Italian, for having, as they deemed, usurped a position that belonged exclusively to them, succeeded in poisoning the king's mind against the secretary, alleging the existence of an intrigue between him and the queen. As this charge against Mary has been often repeated, and is believed by many at the present day, I will here inquire upon what it rests. It is founded, I imagine, upon two things: the favour which Mary bestowed upon Rizzio, and on

1566 the fact that she frequently dictated to him her foreign correspondence when there was no one in her presence but himself. Now, with regard to the favour which Mary showed to Rizzio, and the position to which she raised him, I have only this to say—that she had many precedents for her action in this respect, and that, without going farther than the court of Elizabeth. Mary insisted on her right to recognize merit; and is it wonderful that, surrounded as she was by enemies and false friends, deserted by Moray, and having few whose integrity or even ability she could put trust in,—is it wonderful that, situated as she was, she was glad to find in the Italian one who was both trustworthy and able?

With regard to the second ground of accusation—that she administered much of her foreign correspondence with none in her presence but Rizzio, I reply that she would have been imprudent had she done otherwise; for in what did this correspondence for the most part consist? In relations entered into with Philip II. and the Pope, with a view to the re-establishment of the Catholic

religion in Scotland. The necessity of secrecy in <sup>1566</sup> such a matter I need not enlarge upon. It was absolutely imperative.

We see, then, that this accusation against Mary is founded merely on supposition, and that when the grounds of that supposition are examined, they fail to bear the scrutiny. For if it be urged that such great confidence was strangely placed in this humble Italian, I reply that Rizzio was in the pay of the Pope, and was the trusted agent of the Catholics in Scotland ; and I give as my authority for that statement the names of Melvil and Tytler. But there are those who argue that James I. of England was not improbably the son of the French secretary. This theory is founded on certain letters written by Randolph to Cecil ; on points of mental resemblance between James and Rizzio ; and on the seeming unlikelihood that Mary's son by Darnley should have been so ill-favoured as was James. With respect to the letters of Randolph, it is to be observed, that whatever hints or allegations they contain were based simply upon hearsay, and on evidence which we have already

1566 considered. It should further be remembered that it was Randolph's custom continually to transmit items of scandal about Mary, for the amusement, probably, of Elizabeth, who was much entertained by such communications. Then, as regards the points of mental resemblance between James and Rizzio, what are these said to be? "Meanness, arrogance, and a taste for music and poetry." This is somewhat vague, and even if the likeness in these respects be shown, it may be replied that Darnley was especially arrogant; and as to the fact that James manifested some predilection for music and poetry, surely, it cannot be forgotten that his mother excelled in both. Then as to the seeming improbability that Mary's son by Darnley should have been so ill-favoured as was James—to those who may be influenced by this consideration I would simply say, Remember the 9th of March. James was born on the 19th of the following June!

There is one thing I wish to add. It is important that we should ascertain, if we can in any way do so, what was the real belief of Elizabeth

with respect to this question. Now let it be <sup>1566</sup>  
remembered that the letters of Randolph which  
have been alluded to, and which propagate these  
injurious charges against Mary, were, for the most  
part, addressed to Cecil, and were through him  
transmitted to Elizabeth (either the letters or their  
contents). The English queen was wont to be  
amused by this epistolary scandal; but did she  
really believe it? She might be thought disposed  
to do so, for she was jealous of Mary, both as  
queen and woman. But what was the fact? Did  
she honestly doubt that James was Darnley's son?  
Did she for a moment seriously entertain the  
alternative? I say very certainly that she did  
not; and for this reason: throughout her reign  
she continued to defer the vexed question of the  
succession; she would not appoint her successor;  
but during her latter years she tacitly recognized  
James as such. Now, it was open for her to appoint  
one of his cousins over his head, and had she at  
all believed that his parentage was doubtful—had  
she for an instant thought that he was Rizzio's  
son, she would assuredly have done this; for in

1566 her last illness, when her ministers once more entreated that she would say who should succeed her, she at length replied, "My seat has been the seat of kings: I will have no rascal's son, but a king."

Those are very remarkable words as bearing on this controversy. They show how much value she attached to Randolph's malignities.

But my authority for this utterance of Elizabeth is, perhaps, some historian who is partial to the Queen of Scots? By no means. I quote from Keightley, who is bitterly adverse to her.\*

I have said that Mary was now labouring to restore Catholicism as the established religion of Scotland. Can any blame her for this? I think not. In the first place, she believed in the divine right of the sovereign, and judged it her duty in all ways to uphold what she regarded as the true religion of Christ. Then it must be remembered that Protestantism had been established in Scot-

\* This historian goes on to narrate how Elizabeth, being further interrogated as to what king she meant, replied, "Our cousin of Scotland."

land by unlawful and unconstitutional means, the <sup>1566</sup> Parliament having first deposed the regent without the queen's authority, and then effected a religious revolution, to which the consent of their sovereign was not even asked. Considering these things, and putting aside the fact that Mary regarded the restoration of her own faith as a duty, it is not strange that she should have disliked and wished to supplant a religion which to her was ascetic and gloomy, and under which she had herself but uncertain liberty of conscience.

/ But to return to the narrative. Darnley, angry at being refused the matrimonial crown, and resenting the change towards him in the demeanour of the queen, lent a ready ear to the slanderous insinuations concerning Rizzio, and became the willing tool of those nobles who designed to make use of him to effect their own ends. † It was resolved among the conspirators that the secretary, or, as they called him, "the villain David," should be summarily made away with; and, accordingly, a written agreement was entered into and signed by the king and his companions to carry this purpose

1566 into execution. Thus was deadly feud brought into that house where, but a little while before, might have been viewed even such a scene as this :

It is a high-panelled chamber in Holyrood. In one of the deep recesses of the windows the prime minister, Moray, converses apart with a tall, dark man, whose curling moustache and beard seem to assort with the sinister expression of his face, and whose harsh, unyielding aspect bespeaks him cruel, but without fear. This is the conspirator Morton. At the far end of the room is the queen, reclining in her chair, and listening to the soft strains of the lute, that an Italian, with consummate art, is playing before her. Standing near, and watching the sunlight tinging her lovely hair, is the handsome Darnley; now her impassioned lover; soon to claim her as his bride. Picture the five as they are thus associated together, for an awful destiny is awaiting each. The wiles of the conspirator shall bring him to the block; the astute statesman shall fall by the assassin; the Italian shall stain with his life-blood the very floor on which he stands; Darnley shall die a new and terrible death; while



she, on whom the sunshine now sheds its transient <sup>1566</sup>  
glow, ere her wondrous beauty shall have yet  
begun to fade, shall pass to an English prison  
to pine in solitude; and wronged, desolate, be-  
trayed, shall at last perish at the hands of the  
executioner!

The cloak under which the conspirators plotted the destruction of Rizzio was an affected concern for the queen's honour. When we consider the manner in which these men carried out their design, it is not possible to think that this was even a part of their motive. Let us then inquire what the reasons for this conspiracy really were. Darnley himself was actuated by unjustifiable jealousy; but he was simply an instrument in the hands of men who, pretending to sympathize with his grievances, concealed from him their real plans. The conspirators associated themselves with him in order that they might be sheltered under his authority as king, and protected from any possible after-consequences that might arise to them. To ensure this, two solemn covenants had been drawn up and mutually signed by the conspirators and

1566 the king, by which either party was pledged to support the other.

But we shall best discover the mainsprings of the plot if we examine the list of the confederates. First, then, there was the Lennox faction, which comprised those nobles who were personally attached to the cause of Darnley, and who were determined to humiliate the queen, and compel her to yield to him the sovereign power. Then there was the Earl of Morton, who feared that unless some political commotion were improvised, he would be deprived of his office as chancellor. Then came Moray and those lords who had been banished with him for rebellion; whose estates would shortly be confiscated if no means were found to upset the proceedings of Parliament, and stay the Act of Forfeiture; and lastly, were those barons who, during the minority of the queen had received Crown grants, which they feared they might soon be deprived of, and who, therefore, were ready to further any revolution that might avert such a calamity. Chief amongst these was the Earl of Morton himself, and he was chosen to

conduct the enterprise. Lord Ruthven, a staunch friend of the Lennox family, had also been induced to join in the conspiracy, although he was at this time very ill, and even tottering on the verge of the grave. 1566

Now, twenty-four days previous to the assassination, Randolph, who, it will be remembered, was Elizabeth's ambassador in Scotland, wrote a letter to the Earl of Leicester, in which occur these words: "I know that there are practices in hand, contrived between the father and son (Lennox and Darnley), to come by the crown against her will (Mary's). I know that if that take effect which is intended, David, with the consent of the king, shall have his throat cut within these ten days. Many things grievouser and worse than these are brought to my ears; yea, of things intended against her own person."

Observe that these are words addressed to Leicester, Elizabeth's favourite and confidant. It is obvious for whose ear they were intended.

Again, on the 6th of March (three days before the murder), the English authorities at Berwick

1566 wrote to Elizabeth's secretary of state, revealing to him the whole plot, and the manner of it, and enjoining him most carefully to keep the secret, and to tell none but the queen and Leicester. The original letter is preserved in the State Paper Office, and is quoted by Tytler, and afterwards by Mignet, in elucidation of this diabolical conspiracy. The adjective is a strong one ; but when it is remembered that Darnley had pledged himself to support his confederates, and assist them to carry out the murder, if they should require it, even in the queen's presence, then, I think, it will not appear too strong a word to use. That this was the tenor of the covenant is not disputed, for we have a copy of it made by Randolph from the original, and endorsed in the hand of Cecil. Says Mignet : " Elizabeth was thus duly informed of the plot, and offered no opposition to it. Neither Mary Stuart, thus shamefully betrayed, nor David Rizzio, thus fatally menaced, had any suspicion of the conspiracy formed against the power and honour of the one, and against the life of the other, although this dark intrigue was known to so many persons."

Let us, then, keep in mind these two things : 1566  
that the plot was known to the Court of England  
some considerable time before it was executed ;  
and that it was, from the first, determined on by  
the conspirators to slay Rizzio in Mary's presence,  
notwithstanding that they knew in what condition  
the queen was ; it being, as I have said, but three  
months before the birth of James.

Now, it has been hinted that this conspiracy had  
its first origin in England, and it cannot be denied  
that there is much to deter us from dismissing that  
as an untenable theory. But whether it first arose  
in England or not, it is certain that it had concur-  
rent development there. In Scotland, the causes  
which led to it we have already dealt with. How  
came it to find favour in England ? That question  
it is not difficult to answer. At the time that  
Mary's marriage with Darnley was in contempla-  
tion, the trusted adviser of Elizabeth was Sir  
William Cecil. This minister, that he might pre-  
vent the marriage, drew up a memorial, which he  
presented to the queen. In this document were  
set forth the dangers which he apprehended would

1566 accrue to his mistress if the union were suffered to take place. He said that as the children born of the marriage would be looked upon as the heirs of both crowns, "a great number in this realm of England, not of the worst subjects, might be alienated in their minds from their natural duties to her Majesty, and favour all devices and practices that should tend to the advancement of the Queen of Scots." He then went on to say, that scarcely a third part of the people of England were fully to be trusted in the matter of religion, and insisted that great danger was to be looked for from Mary if she were to become the wife of Darnley, and especially if children were born of the marriage.

This throws light on the attitude of the English Court towards the conspiracy to murder Rizzio. Cecil knew that the deed was to be done in the presence of the queen. Is it possible to think that he did not also know that Mary expected soon to be delivered of an heir to the Scottish throne? The gossip of Randolph had not left him so uninstructed. The conclusion to be drawn from this is amazing, and well-nigh incredible, but I see

not how to avoid it ;—that the ministers of Eliza- <sup>1566</sup>  
beth, perhaps the queen herself, favoured this  
conspiracy, not that the Italian might die, but  
that subtle and awful means might be used to  
destroy at one blow both the mother and the un-  
born child. But it seemed that Mary could meet  
any fate, and the catastrophe was averted by the  
almost incredible courage which possessed her  
when that fearful trial came.

It has been said, that both the queen and Rizzio  
were entirely ignorant of the plot that was being  
formed against them ; but it is recorded that the  
latter had been warned by an astrologer, named  
Damiot, to “beware of the bastard,” George  
Douglas, an illegitimate son of the Earl of Angus,  
and one of the conspirators, being evidently indi-  
cated. But Rizzio, supposing Moray to be meant,  
disregarded the admonition, as that nobleman was,  
at the time, in banishment.

As to the extent to which Knox and his fellow  
minister, Craig, were implicated in the plot, I will  
quote the words of Mignet. I frequently lean on  
this historian, not merely because of his great

1566 authority, but for additional reasons: first, that his judgment on the character of Mary Stuart is, in the main, exceedingly adverse (and, therefore, when I cite him in her defence, the testimony must have the greater weight); and secondly, because although he be adverse, he is never a partisan. He himself says, "I shall not judge Mary Stuart as she would be judged by a Catholic or a Protestant, a Scotsman or an Englishman."

But, as I have said, I now quote him to show the manner in which the Presbyterian clergy were involved in this conspiracy. The assassination had been fixed for Saturday, the 9th of March. These, then, are Mignet's words:—

"On the 3rd of March commenced the week of the great general fast of the Reformed Church, which had brought all the most zealous Protestants to Edinburgh. Knox and Craig, who were both privy to the conspiracy, chose subjects for sermons calculated to inflame the public mind, and prepare it for what was about to happen. The Bible abounded in startling examples of punishment. The death of Oreb and Zeeb, the defeat



of the Benjamites, the history of Esther, and the execution of Haman, all impressed upon these 1566  
alarmed and violent men the duty of inflicting swift and summary vengeance on the enemies of the people of God. At this time the enemy of the people of God was the poor Italian secretary, who was detested as a foreigner, envied as a favourite, and feared as a Catholic; and whom the nobles engaged in the conspiracy, had resolved to sacrifice in the presence of the queen herself."

That Knox was involved in the plot is corroborated by the fact that he fled into England immediately after the murder, and did not return until the queen was made a prisoner in the Castle of Lochleven.

Let it not be thought that I would call in question the integrity of Knox. I doubt not that he acted throughout according to his conscience. But let me ask this: Will any one now wonder at Mary for distrusting and wishing to overthrow a religion whose most zealous professors were capable of acting thus? Assuredly, a brighter side to that religion Mary had never seen.

1566 It should be borne in mind that this plot against Rizzio was entered into by Darnley in less than eight months after his marriage, when he was not yet twenty-one. The queen was twenty-three.

It is an hour past sunset. To the loiterer at the foot of the Canongate the battlements of Holyrood show black against the sky. The cold wind of March sweeps across the desert tract that lies to the east, and howls among the towers. The rugged outline of the Crag is dimly seen through the gloom, and the abrupt hill behind overhangs the palace in threatening closeness. The warder before the gate treads his changeless round; but the noise of his steps is borne away by the wind, that moans and shrieks as if it were prescient of coming woe. There are lights in the north-west tower. Yonder casement is the queen's. Who is he that, closely muffled against the blast, is hovering near? He looks upward to that light with rapturous longing, and loves to linger there. Go to, thou mayest not think of her. Forswear it. She smiled on thee when thou didst doff thy

bonnet to her? Ay, ay, how small a spark will <sup>1566</sup>  
bring the flame! Go to. But see! something has  
startled him, and he retires into the darkness.

Issuing from the Canongate, and noiselessly proceeding towards the palace gates, appears a band of about two hundred men, all armed, and apparently under the direction of the three figures that are advancing a little space in front. The light from the windows is occasionally glinted back from some casque, or pike-head, as it catches the rays; and now and then the rattle of arms tells that some soldier is less wary than his fellows. The three leaders are the barons Morton, Lindsay, and Ruthven. The last, from time to time, turns his head, and in a hoarse whisper commands the men to move with greater stealth; and thus, unchallenged, they pass the gates and enter the courtyard.

But two remain on the outside, and converse for a few minutes with the warder who has thus betrayed his trust. The pair then slowly advance until they stand some paces to the north-west of the tower where the uppermost light indicates the

1566 chamber of the queen. Their youthful bearing and the richness of their attire (for as the rays from the lower casement fall on them, they reveal the scarlet bonnet and embroidered cloak) tells that they are pages, probably in attendance on the barons who have gone within. There is a dim light in the chapel, that faintly shows the rich colouring of the western window, and the painted figures of St. Peter and St. Paul. Fearing lest they should be seen, the taller of the youths is about to draw his comrade back into the darkness, when the shadow of a man falls for an instant on the silken curtain that is across the casement in the queen's chamber. "See there!" cries the youth, in a hurried whisper; "it is the Signor David; I know the shape. Soft! 'Tis gone. He will cast no more shadows." Scarcely had he spoken when the light was again obscured, and they beheld the outline of a figure in armour, that rested a moment on the screen and then vanished as before. "Ruthven!" ejaculated the page. "The rest were without their mail. See! they are throwing open the lattice. Hark to that!" A cry came

on the air, piercing and full of pain. The winds <sup>1566</sup> caught it up, and whirling it round the palace, shrieked in unison, and then, bearing it with them, sent it afar, and howled it to the mountains!

But in the meantime, what has been passing within? Let us enter Holyrood and see.

The queen is seated at supper in the small cabinet that communicates with her bedroom. It is a tiny chamber, not more than twelve feet square, and yet there are present in it several others besides herself: her brother and sister, the Lord Robert and Lady Jane Stuart, the natural children of James V.; Arthur Erskine, the captain of the queen's guard, and others of the household; and David Rizzio. The rooms on the floor below are those of the Lord Darnley. The cabinet, as we have said, opens into the queen's bedchamber, and this, again, communicates with that of the king by a narrow winding stair made in the thickness of the wall, and descending to the floor beneath. The queen's bedroom, moreover, on the side removed from the cabinet, opens into the spacious audience-chamber, which is reached from

1566 the landing of the principal staircase. Darnley had to-night supped earlier than usual, and when Ruthven entered his room, shortly before eight o'clock, the king was waiting his coming. Morton and Lindsay had remained with their retainers to guard the approaches to the palace. Darnley and Ruthven were presently joined by George Douglas and two others—Ker of Faudonside and Patrick Bellenden. At eight o'clock the five stealthily mount the secret staircase, and are soon standing in the queen's bedchamber. There is now but the door of the cabinet between them and their victim. Darnley is to enter first. Timorous and irresolute, how hast thou nerved thyself for this deed? His eyes tell he has been drinking; but, as he takes the lock in his nervous clutch, his heart fails him, and he draws back from the door. But there is time. The prey cannot escape. Is there no boding of danger in the minds of those within? None. They are perfectly secure. Supper is finished, and the queen has commanded Rizzio to play some favourite air. The Italian is preparing to obey, and Mary converses with her

sister, the Countess of Argyll. The noise of the <sup>1566</sup> wind reaches the chamber in mournful howling, and at times the walls seem to shake with the storm. There is a hand on the outside latch—the slightest possible sound; but no one marks it. It was the wind. Mary Stuart still speaks with her sister, and in another moment the Italian will have commenced his song. But the door opens, and Darnley enters and seats himself beside the queen. And what did Mary? When her estranged lover, he who should ever have cherished her, rendered thus what seemed to her the first mark of kindness he had shown her for many a weary day, what did she? She turned and embraced him.\* Oh, Henry Stuart, the steel of yonder assassins has no greater pang than thine!

But the illusion was shortlived. In less than a minute after the entrance of Darnley, the door of the cabinet again opened, and Ruthven, clad in full armour, stood in the presence of his queen. Pale and haggard with a disease under which, seven weeks later, he himself sank into the grave,

\* Memoir addressed to Cosmo I., Labanoff, vol. vii. p. 73.

1566 this desperate baron had come upon his errand of death. Mary Stuart was alarmed. She turned to Darnley. "What is it?" said she. He replied, "It is nothing." He would have drawn back now; but it was too late. She appealed to Ruthven, and commanded him to say what was his business with her, that he intruded himself upon her privacy, in that guise and at such an hour. Ruthven replied, "Let yonder man, David, come forth; he hath been here over long." "What offence hath he done?" said the queen. "An it please you," answered Ruthven, "he is a heinous offence to your Majesty's honour, to the king, your husband, and to the nobility and commonwealth." The queen replied, that if any one had charge to bring against Rizzio, he should be exhibited before the lords of Parliament to be punished, if in any sort he had offended. She then commanded Ruthven, under pain of treason, to void him forth from her presence; but, in the meantime, Douglas, Faudon-side, and Bellenden, armed with daggers and pistols, had crowded into the room, and were menacing their victim. Ruthven, disregarding the



order to retire, now approached Rizzio to lay <sup>1566</sup> hands on him; but the nerveless Italian took refuge behind the queen, and in his despair, clutched at the pleats of her gown, crying out to her, "Madame, je suis mort! Giustizia, giustizia! Sauve ma vie, madame, sauve ma vie!" The others now pressed on, but Mary strove to defend the unhappy secretary from their weapons, which were, for a moment, turned against herself. One of the assassins placed his cocked pistol to her breast, and swore that he would shoot her if she did not desist. Others struck at Rizzio, over her shoulder, with their daggers, and, in the confusion, the queen fell, and the table was overturned and thrown on to her. Rizzio still clung to her dress, but Darnley forced open his hands and compelled him to loosen his grasp. The rest now seized him and pulled him away, Darnley, in the meanwhile, holding Mary in his arms, that she might be able to make no further resistance. The poor, trembling victim, still crying out to the queen to save him, was thus hurried from the cabinet, and dragged through Mary's bedchamber, and across her pre-

1566 sence-chamber to the landing of the great staircase.

Here were Morton and Lindsay, and others of the conspirators, waiting to receive him. It was the intention of some to keep him until the morning, and then hang him; but George Douglas, unable to restrain his rage, struck him with Darnley's poniard, hissing between his teeth: "That is from the king!" Having once tasted blood, the assassins, like beasts of prey, were roused to fury. They fell on the poor wretch with the rage of tigers, and in a few seconds they had stabbed him with sixty wounds.

So perished Queen Mary's French secretary, the Italian, David Rizzio.

\* \* \* \* \*

Benjamin Robert Haydon has recorded in his diary, that having visited the palace of Holyrood, he bargained with the housekeeper to let him return by candlelight, that he might go over the historical chambers alone. Can we not fancy with what an intenseness the nerves of this

strange being were strung, as, with uncovered head, the flickering taper in his hand, he wandered noiselessly from room to room, stealing on tiptoe through the uncertain light, the very shoes from off his feet, as if indeed he trod on holy ground? With what a shuddering nervousness does he pass from the audience-chamber into Queen Mary's room; with what a strangeness of ecstasy does he stand spell-bound in the midst; how is all his inborn superstition awaked, and tenfold increased, as, raising the light aloft, he looks into the very mirror that Mary Stuart used. Does he not fancy there was something reflected there besides his own haggard face; does he not fear to glance around him, lest some ghastly image meet his view? Oh, Benjamin Haydon, now, as the wind hurries past the casement and shakes the ancient tower; as the storm beats against the lattice and thy heart is knocking at thy ribs; now, when every condition is fulfilled and the poetic charm complete, tell thy thoughts now. Put on canvas the wondrous experience of that night, and the world will no more be cold; show

us but dimly the marvellous joy of that fear-fraught ecstasy, and there will never be the cruel need for that last, that terrible entry of the 22nd of June. "God forgive me. Amen." Who does not echo that broken-hearted prayer !

SOME ACCOUNT, AND A DEFENCE,  
OF THE ACTIONS OF

MARY STUART,

*FROM MARCH 9, 1566, TO JUNE 17, 1567.*



FROM the moment that Morton, Lindsay, and <sup>1566</sup>  
Ruthven seized the gates of the palace, the queen  
became a prisoner in the hands of the conspirators.  
These were now masters of the situation. Mary  
Stuart had summoned the Estates that she might  
procure the condemnation of Moray and the rebel  
lords. She had opened Parliament in person on  
Thursday, the 7th of March, and the Act of  
Forfeiture against the exiles was to have been  
voted on the following Tuesday. But the con-  
spirators had not delayed. On the evening of  
the 9th, they had, as we have seen, forcibly  
occupied Holyrood, murdered the queen's servant  
well-nigh in her presence, and now they detained  
their sovereign a prisoner in her own palace.  
Her position appeared desperate, but her courage  
and ability were this time to deliver her from the  
hands of her enemies. It was the design of the

1566 rebels to remove the queen to Stirling, and to confine her in the castle there, until such time as she should have sanctioned in Parliament all their doings : and it was doubtless their intention, as Mary herself says, either to have put her to death, or to have kept her in perpetual captivity, had they been unable to extort that sanction from her. But their purposes were defeated : how, we shall presently see.

On the Sunday, the day following the murder, Darnley, on his own authority, dissolved the Parliament. In the evening of the same day returned to Holyrood the Earl of Moray. Mary, on hearing of his arrival, at once sent a request that he might be permitted to see her. She did not know then that he was one of those who had signed the covenant to murder her secretary. When he came into her presence she ran towards him, and throwing herself into his arms, she said : “ Ah ! my brother, if you had been here they would not have treated me so.” Moray burst into tears. I like him for those tears. James, Earl of Moray, cast ambition from thee : let thy



strong arm defend her who flees to thy bosom <sup>1566</sup>  
for shelter, as the dove flees to the rock!

But it might not be.

On the next day, Monday, the 11th of March, the conspirators all met together to decide upon the action they would take with regard to the queen. The tenour of their decision I have already indicated. But in the course of certain private interviews which Mary had with Darnley on that day, she represented to him the position in which he would probably be involved, if he suffered her authority to be set aside; showing him that the men who had so acted towards her, were not likely to be more scrupulous with him. So clearly did she put before him his true position, that she induced him to abandon his confederates, and ally himself with her. He accordingly announced to the conspirators that the queen had been seized with fever, and was threatened with miscarriage; and that it was absolutely necessary that she should be allowed a change of air. The conspirators were, at first, strongly inclined to suspect the good faith of

1566 Darnley, but their scruples were ultimately overcome, and they agreed that the queen should be removed, on condition that she would first of all sign a document which they had drawn up to provide for their safety, and protect them from her subsequent displeasure. To this Darnley agreed, and the document was committed to him, to which he promised to obtain Mary's signature. Darnley then urged upon them that they should retire with their men, that the queen might appear under no restraint, lest she might afterwards urge that her signature was extorted by force, and therefore invalid.

The conspirators thus shamefully betrayed by Darnley, fell into the snare, and on Monday evening withdrew with their men. Some hours later, Mary Stuart, accompanied by the king, secretly left Holyrood, under cover of the night, and, mounted on fleet steeds, they fled to Dunbar. On Tuesday morning the rebels discovered that they were baffled, and that the document designed to protect them had been left at Holyrood unsigned.

Having come to Dunbar, Mary summoned her nobility to meet her in arms, and in a few days she was at the head of a considerable army. On the 16th of March she issued a proclamation against the conspirators as having perpetrated murder in her palace and detained her own person in captivity. Still unaware of the complicity of Moray and Argyll, she pardoned them for their late rebellion and received them again into favour, on condition that they should not join with the assassins. These she pursued with untiring energy. She marched upon Edinburgh to take vengeance on them in person ; but they fled at her approach, and took refuge in England. Morton, Ruthven, and Lindsay ; George Douglas, Andrew Ker, and sixty-five others, were proscribed ; and several of the subordinate accomplices, who had remained in Edinburgh, were seized and put to death.

Darnley now issued a manifesto, in which he disavowed all connexion with the late conspiracy. " His Grace, for the removing of the evil opinion which the good subjects may be induced to conceive through false reports and seditious rumours,

1566 hath, as well to the Queen's Majesty, as in the presence of the Lords of Secret Council, plainly declared upon his honour, fidelity, and the word of a prince, that he never knew of any part of the treasonable conspiracy whereof he is slanderously and falsely accused; nor never counselled, commanded, consented, assisted, nor approved the same." So the manifesto ran.

This most base treachery on the part of Darnley excited against him a very storm of wrath among his late confederates. These swore to be avenged, and well, at last, did they keep their oath. For the present they contented themselves with transmitting to Mary copies of the two bonds by which the king had pledged himself to aid in Rizzio's murder.

"The queen," says Mignet, "had previously thought that, blinded for a moment by jealousy, he might have acted without due reflection. But now, informed of the whole extent of his criminality, she forever withdrew from him her confidence, and regarded him with feelings of unmitigated disgust. He was evermore considered by

her as an ungrateful husband, a perfidious conspirator, and a cowardly liar." 1566

But be it my task to show that bitter as was at first the queen's resentment towards Darnley, she thereafter truly forgave him ; and though she could not again esteem him, that she tried to render to him that love which she felt was due to her husband.

The time of Mary's confinement had now come, and on the 19th of June, at about half-past nine in the morning, was born in Edinburgh Castle, James, Prince of Scotland. In the course of the day Darnley visited the queen, and she, in the presence of several persons, presented his son to him after the usual manner ; saying that, under this boy, she hoped would be united the two kingdoms of Scotland and England. Sir James Melvil was at once dispatched into England to carry tidings to Queen Elizabeth of this event, and to ask that she would be godmother at the baptism. "The queen," says an old historian, "received him with a cheerful countenance, but was inwardly displeased at his message." The

1566 news reached her when she was in the midst of a ball that she was giving to her court at Greenwich. When Cecil had whispered it in her ear, she sank dejectedly into a chair, saying to the ladies who were about her : " The Queen of Scots is mother of a fair son, while I am but a barren stock."

We see that now, Mary Stuart and Darnley were at least outwardly reconciled ; but it was impossible that there could be lasting agreement between them. It was to the interest of many to foment their differences, and keep alive the quarrel ; and we find Randolph still at his gossip on this ever yielding theme.

About this time James Hepburn, fourth Earl of Bothwell, began to enjoy, in an especial manner, the favour of the queen. This baron was now about thirty years of age. He was hereditary Admiral of Scotland, and held other high offices in the State. He was greatly distinguished for personal bravery, and, by his feats in the Debateable Land, had made his name a terror to the English borderers. He is described by Throck-

morton as "glorious, rash, and hazardous ;" and <sup>1566</sup> Randolph writes, in one of his letters to Cecil, that "Bothwell is as naughty a man as liveth, and much given to the detestable vices." He was possessed of the greatest resolution, and for unscrupulous ambition he had probably no equal in Scotland. Such was the man whom Mary Stuart, in an evil hour, resolved to make her chief adviser. And yet, it is not wonderful that she should have so resolved. Bothwell had always been faithful to the crown, and he seemed to the queen as one of the very few of her barons on whom she might rely. It is true that she had taken back into favour her brother, the Earl of Moray ; but that nobleman had already too greatly compromised himself, and it was not possible that she should wholly trust him again.

The life which Darnley led at this time, appears to have been an exceedingly miserable one. His pettishness, his arrogant pride, and his intemperance, prevented any cordiality between him and the queen ; while, on the other hand, he was despised and shunned by the nobles, and left

1566 isolated in the midst of the court. Moreover, he began to suspect that plots were being formed against his life, and, at one time, he contemplated retiring for safety to the continent. His suspicions were, so far, premature, but they were soon to be terribly realized.

Towards the end of September, great disturbances arose in the south-east part of the kingdom, among the Scottish borderers. Three powerful families of Liddesdale were at war one with the other. On the 6th of October the queen despatched the Earl of Bothwell to suppress the tumult; and this he succeeded in doing, though, in a personal encounter with the freebooter, John Elliot of Park, he was wounded, and had to retire for surgical attendance to the Castle of Hermitage, which was near at hand. On the 8th, the queen came in person to Jedburgh to hold her assizes, which lasted for seven days. Her judicial functions being discharged, she hastened to Hermitage, to pay a visit to Bothwell, it being her twofold purpose to congratulate him upon the success of his enterprise, and to express her concern at his illness.



She was accompanied, on this occasion, by the <sup>1566</sup> Earl of Moray and others of her nobles. Now, there would seem to be nothing very extraordinary in Mary's thus visiting her chief minister, who had fought and been wounded in her cause. And yet we are told that by so doing, she gave conclusive proof that she had conceived an overpowering passion for him.

"Understanding the certain report of his accident," says Thomas Crawford, "the queen was so grieved in heart that she took no repose in body until she saw him." But who is Thomas Crawford? A creature of the Earl of Lennox. What were the relations existing, at this time, between Lennox and Mary? He had been banished from her court, and bidden never to return.

The queen, we are told, spent an hour with Bothwell, and went back to Jedburgh on the same day. On the day following, she was taken dangerously ill. A violent fever seized her, and she was delirious for several days. She was supposed to be at the point of death; but a favourable crisis ensued, and she was declared out of danger.

1566 Darnley did not visit her until the 28th of October. He remained one night at Jedburgh, and returned to Glasgow on the next day.

Now, what does Crawford assign as the cause of the queen's illness? "The great distress of her mind for the Earl of Bothwell." Those are his words. So absurd an explanation I should not quote at all, were it not that universally accepted by Mary's enemies. "*The great distress of her mind for the Earl of Bothwell.*" What manner of danger, then, was Bothwell in? A wound in the side, perhaps, that it was feared might be mortal? By no means. Some injury to the leg, then, whereby he might lose a limb? Not even that. What, then, was this great peril of her minister, distress for which had brought the queen almost to the point of death? A wound in the hand! That was all. Simply a wound in the hand.\* We read that within a very few days he was convalescent. So much, then, for the gratuitous elucidations of Thomas Crawford!

The queen had so far recovered by the begin-

\* Birrel's Diary.

ning of November that she was able to leave <sup>1566</sup>  
Jedburgh on the 8th. On the 20th she came to  
the Castle of Craigmillar, situated about a league  
from the capital. Although convalescent, she was  
still very far from well, and appeared oppressed  
by a deep melancholy that she was unable to  
shake off. Lethington, writing to the Archbishop  
of Glasgow, says, "It is an heartbreak for her to  
think that he should be her husband, and how  
to be free of him she sees no outlet."

I have already alluded to fears entertained by  
the barons as to the probable revocation of certain  
Crown grants. It was in the power of the Scottish  
sovereigns, on the completion of their twenty-fifth  
year, to recall all grants which might have been  
made either by themselves or by their regents.  
Now the grants made in Mary's name by the  
Earl of Arran, and by her mother, and subsequently  
by the queen herself, had been very extensive,  
insomuch that the Crown revenues had been re-  
duced to one-third their normal value. It will be  
remembered that I am now writing of November,  
1566. Mary Stuart was born in December, 1542.

1566 In little more than a year she would come into that power so dreaded by the barons. We have seen that, before Mary's marriage with Darnley, the Earls of Moray and Argyll had formed a plot to seize the queen, and imprison her in Lochleven Castle ; we have seen how by a conspiracy, ostensibly against her secretary, a blow had been aimed at the life of Mary herself ; we have seen how the conspirators, baffled in this, had designed to keep her captive ; and we shall presently see that destruction still more subtle was now to be invented against her.

What, then, is the significance of this ? Surely, there is but one answer : that the barons had resolved that by December, 1567, Mary Stuart should have ceased to reign in Scotland.

Now Lethington, who had been made secretary of state on Mary's return from France, was one of the barons concerned in the murder of Rizzio. For his participation in that conspiracy he had been deprived of his office, and directed to retire to Inverness. On the 2nd of August, five months after the murder, he was pardoned and admitted

to the queen's presence. This is the man with <sup>1566</sup>  
whom we have now to deal.

The queen is at Craigmillar. As I have said, she had but imperfectly recovered her health, and her spirits were deeply dejected. We read that she would often repeat these words: "I wish that I were dead." Do we wonder at her melancholy? Mary Stuart was a woman of keen penetration, and possessed a great knowledge of men and things. Is it to be supposed that she was entirely ignorant of the dangers that surrounded her? But Lethington tells us that she is fretting in that she cannot free herself from Darnley. How comes Lethington by this knowledge of Mary Stuart's mind? It will be instructive to inquire.

The members of her Privy Council came to the queen, and entreated that she would pardon those barons who were in banishment for the murder of Rizzio. Not succeeding in their purpose, we are told that they deputed Lethington to urge their request anew. We are told that Lethington negotiated the exiles' return "at the price of a divorce, and, if necessary, of a murder." A very

1566 terrible charge! Upon what does it rest? Hear the account of the interview between Lethington and the queen. "He reminded her of the great and intolerable injuries she had received from her husband, laying much stress upon the ingratitude which he had displayed towards her, and upon the offences of which he continued daily to be guilty. He then added that if her Majesty would be pleased to pardon the Earl of Morton, and the Lords Ruthven and Lindsay, they (the Privy Council), in concert with the rest of the nobility, would find means to separate her from her husband by a divorce. But Mary affected scruples, and said that she would willingly retire into France, and leave Darnley in Scotland until he acknowledged his faults. But Lethington replied to her that the nobles of her kingdom would not allow her to do so; and he even ventured, in mysterious terms, to inform her of their dark designs. 'Madam,' he said, 'souce ye not we are here of the principal of your Grace's nobility and Council, that shall find the means well to make your Majesty quit of him?' The queen understood

the full meaning of the insinuation, and replied <sup>1566</sup> that it was her pleasure nothing should be done by which any spot might be laid upon her honour ; but she displayed no great indignation at the idea, and contented herself with saying, ' Better permit the matter remain in the state it is, abiding till God in His goodness put remedy thereto. What you think for my good may turn to my hurt.' "

Such is the account given of this interview between Mary and Lethington. We are asked to believe that the queen thus tacitly gave her consent to the murder of Darnley. Now let us grant that such a conference took place as is here narrated. Is there anything in these words ascribed to Mary to show that she entertained any suspicion of Lethington's true meaning? Is there anything to show that she contemplated other than a divorce? Surely there is not. But she may have conveyed her assent to the murder by a look, by a tone. This, her enemies say that she did. Well, from what source do we learn what was said and done at this interview? Whose account do we receive? Lethington's!

1566 Why, what sort of evidence is this? It is the evidence of a man who, holding a position of trust from his sovereign, had, a few months before, joined in a diabolical conspiracy against her; it is the evidence of a man who is now plotting a fresh and horrible murder; it is the evidence of a man who, if he would gain his ends, must swear as he has done, whether his words be false or true.

The plot against the life of Darnley, which we have now begun to consider, is so exceedingly subtle, and so manifold in its bearings, that it needs the closest inquiry. First, then, as to its causes. The original motive was the revenge of the conspirators for the manner in which they had been betrayed by the king after the murder of Rizzio. Men so ruthless as these were not likely to let such perfidy go unpunished. But they proceeded cautiously, and, under the guidance of some master of cunning, they so contrived that the assassination of Darnley should also work with it the downfall of the queen. Their leader was probably Lethington, but it is impossible to say certainly where the hidden springs of this heinous villainy lay.



Now mark the crafty manner in which the con-<sup>1566</sup>  
spirators laboured. They come to the queen, and  
intreat her to pardon the exiles. What is their  
motive? All those in banishment are the im-  
placable enemies of Darnley, and their return is  
necessary to ensure his destruction. A desperate  
blow is intended against the queen. Those who  
will strike it are chiefly the barons who tremble for  
their lands. Now, many of the most powerful of  
these are in the number of the exiles. Those at  
home cannot act alone. The murderers of Rizzio,  
then, must be recalled. And this purpose was  
effected. The queen pardoned them all, except  
George Douglas and Andrew Ker. The former  
had stabbed Rizzio over Mary's shoulder; the  
latter had held a loaded pistol to her breast.

Among the conspirers against Darnley, the Earl  
of Bothwell was apparently chief. In reality he  
was a tool in the hands of Lethington. Lord  
Bothwell was not one of those whom Darnley had  
betrayed. He had had no part in the murder of  
Rizzio. On the contrary, he was a most loyal  
subject, and had ever stood distinguished for his

1566 fidelity to the crown. Why, then, is he one of the first to whom Lethington communicates the plot? It is not hard to see. Bothwell was a hardy soldier, "glorious, rash, and hazardous," but not skilled in cunning. Lethington was a cool politician; a man of infinite craft. The statesman saw in this blustering baron the very instrument he needed. He well knew his boundless ambition, and that he would risk anything to satisfy it. Here, then, was the man. Bothwell joins the conspiracy, not to be avenged on Darnley, but that he may thereafter marry the queen. It is a great idea, and commends itself to his adventurous soul. He is more zealous than any. But, I repeat, he was a tool in the hands of Lethington. Why is he brought into the conspiracy at all, if, as is alleged, the plot was against Darnley alone, and not against the queen? Is it not plain that from the first it was designed by Lethington that Bothwell should become the murderer of Darnley, and afterwards marry Mary? What other inducement was held out to him to join so dangerous a conspiracy? Here, as it seems to me, is the meaning of this strange association of the impertinent Bothwell.

In less than a month after the formation of this <sup>1566</sup> plot against Darnley, his infant son was baptized at Stirling Castle. Queen Elizabeth, in her capacity of godmother, sent into Scotland the Earl of Bedford, with a font of gold for the ceremony. The baptism took place on the 17th of December, amid much splendour, the arrangements having been committed to the Earl of Bothwell, who was still high in the queen's favour. Darnley, although he was residing at Stirling Castle at the time, was not present at the ceremony. Buchanan says that he was absent because he had no dress fit to appear in, so neglected was he by the queen. But a contemporary historian,\* at least as reliable as Buchanan, says that "even at those times when he abandoned her society, and withdrew himself to a distance, she diminished not, in the slightest degree, the grandeur of his first appointments, but continued to supply him with all things pertaining to his position."

But the true reason for Darnley's absence is well-known. The Earl of Bedford and his suite had

\* Belforest.

1566 been commanded by Elizabeth not to recognize him as the king consort.\*

On December the 24th, the Earl of Morton and his accomplices in the murder of Rizzio were received back and pardoned. Darnley, alarmed at the return of his enemies, hurriedly left Stirling, and took refuge at the house of his father, at Glasgow. Shortly after his arrival there, he was taken dangerously ill of the small-pox. When the nature of the malady was known, he sent a request to Mary that she would send him her own physician. As a proof that the physician was sent, we have the testimony of the Earl of Bedford, in his own handwriting. This nobleman was at Stirling Castle at the time the leech left for Glasgow.†

1567 Darnley had been taken ill on January the 4th. On the 21st, Mary herself, who was at Edinburgh, set out thence to visit him, and she having come to Glasgow, a reconciliation took place between her and her husband, which, as I think, was beyond doubt sincere. But Mary's enemies deny this.

\* Camden.

† Scotch correspondence ; State Paper Office.

They say that her forgiveness was feigned. Let us <sup>1567</sup> see upon what they ground their assertion.

This is the first evidence against her : On the day before she set out to visit Darnley, she thus wrote concerning him to the Archbishop of Glasgow : “ His behaviour and thankfulness to us are equally well known to God and the world : especially our own indifferent subjects see it, and in their hearts, we doubt not, condemn the same. Always we perceive him occupied and busy enough to have inquisition of our doings ; which, God willing, shall always be such as none shall have occasion to be offended with them, or to report of us any ways but honourably, however he, his father, and their fautors speak ; which, we know, want no good will to make us have ado, if their power were equivalent to their minds.”

Says Mignet : “ On the day after she had expressed herself with such suspicious severity of Darnley, she set out for Glasgow to lavish marks of the strongest affection upon him.” When we recall how Darnley had treated her ; in what manner, and under what circumstances he had

1567 brought her face to face with rebels and murderers, on that terrible 9th of March, can we characterize her words as suspiciously severe?

But this letter is brought as evidence against her. Well, is it probable that if she were now setting out, as her enemies say, deliberately intending to aid in her husband's murder,—is it probable that she would have so written as to give colour to that charge?

Now, what do Mary's accusers say concerning the first meeting with Darnley? We are told that the king "was greatly surprised to see her, knowing that she had recently spoken in harsh terms of him, and having received vague warnings of the \ Craigmillar conspiracy: that he did not conceal his apprehensions from the queen, but told her that he had heard she had refused to sign a paper authorizing his seizure, and, if necessary, his assassination, but that he would never believe she would do him any hurt." But from whom do these details come? From Thomas Crawford! This witness, the purport of the conversation which took place between Mary and Darnley, having, as he declares, been

communicated to him by Darnley himself, makes <sup>1567</sup>  
a formal deposition of the same.

Mary Stuart, being truly reconciled to her husband (so, at least, it seems to me), tenderly nursed him until he was convalescent. (She then brought him in a litter by easy stages to Edinburgh, where he was placed in a house in the Kirk of Field, it being deemed undesirable that he should go to Holyrood until such time as he should be free from infection. The house was an exceedingly small one, consisting only of two storeys. The queen occupied a chamber below that fitted up for Darnley, whom she continued to attend upon with the greatest kindness and assiduity. She hardly ever left him, either by night or day; "but," say her enemies, "Darnley's fears were not entirely dispelled." "I have fears enough," he is reported to have said, before leaving Glasgow; "but may God judge between us. I have her promise only to trust to, but I have put myself in her hands, and I shall go with her though she should murder me."

But what evidence have we that Darnley used these words? The deposition of Thomas Craw-

1567 ford! That this man is a lying witness is surely sufficiently plain. Is it possible to think that Darnley could have so felt towards Mary, and so have spoken of her, and yet have eagerly placed himself under the care of her private physician?

Again, Darnley is known to have been of a timorous and cowardly nature. If he entertained this fear of Mary, why did he trust himself to her? Why leave Glasgow at all, where, at least he might have been secure in his father's house? The journey can have been scarcely tempting to an invalid in the depth of winter. I submit that this evidence of Crawford is manifestly false, and it will be seen that great importance attaches as to how it is regarded.

Darnley had been brought to Edinburgh on the 31st of January. On the evening of February 9th Mary Stuart sat up with him until a late hour. At about eleven o'clock she left him to attend a ball at Holyrood, given to celebrate the marriage of Margaret Carwood, one of her servants, with Signor Sebastiani. At about two in the following morning, the house in which the



king was lodged was blown up by gunpowder, and <sup>1567</sup> completely destroyed. The bodies of Darnley, however, and of his favourite page, Taylor, were discovered in the garden, lifeless, but having no marks of violence upon them. It would seem that the king, alarmed by some noise in the chambers beneath him, must have fled from the house and endeavoured to escape his assassins; but was pursued and strangled, together with his servant. The train must have in the meantime ignited, but no hair of Darnley's head was singed. It is a strange coincidence that both father and son should have so narrowly escaped destruction by gunpowder.

In the course of a very few days it became known throughout Edinburgh that Bothwell was the author of the king's murder. Indeed, that nobleman seems to have taken small care to avoid suspicion, and to have gone to work in the most overt manner. } He had sent to Dunbar for a barrel of gunpowder, and had caused it to be placed in a room beneath the king's, and was himself near at hand when the explosion took place.

1567 No suspicion was at first entertained that Mary Stuart was in any way implicated in this assassination. But there were not wanting those who would soon whisper this abroad ; whose interest, and even existence, demanded that this should be believed. Knots of persons began to gather at the street corners, and to throw out dark hints to each other that "they could an if they would," and to shake their heads. The citizens as they passed near the sombre palace, would glance mistrustfully up at the windows, and go their way. When they remembered the gracious manner of their princess, and recalled her beautiful face, then, indeed, they could not believe her guilty of this great wickedness ; but Mary's enemies were busy amongst them. Soon, very soon, would a tempest of wrath overwhelm her, such as no monarch has braved ; none other, but only she.

But let us pass on to inquire with all care what proofs are urged of this all but impossible charge.

\\ We are asked to believe that a queen, who, up to this period of her life had been, humanly speaking, without blame (for the alleged intrigue with Rizzio

I have shown to be a baseless calumny)—I say, <sup>1567</sup>  
we are asked to believe that Mary Stuart, beloved  
by all for her virtue, whose husband, Francis, had  
died blessing her for her goodness to him,—we are  
asked to believe that she, from being a woman,  
suddenly became a fiend. We are told that she  
hastened to Glasgow to lavish on the unsuspecting  
Darnley a feigned tenderness—to greet him with  
a Judas kiss ; that with crafty dissimulation she  
made him believe that he was pardoned ; that  
with fond embraces she won him over to trust  
himself to her ; and finally, that she brought him  
to the Kirk of Field that he might be horribly  
destroyed by her lover, the Earl of Bothwell. No,  
this is not all. We are told that this was done  
without faltering ; that she at no time wavered ;  
that the assassins had such faith in her constancy  
that they trusted her at their victim's bedside even  
at the eleventh hour. Hardy warriors such as  
Bothwell do not readily trust a woman in such  
a matter. Did it not cross the baron's mind, had  
he no misgivings that Mary might falter ; that  
when she should say to her husband, " God be

1567 with you, farewell!" that those words would stick in her throat; that pity would overcome her; that in tears and penitence she would save him at the last? He had no such misgivings, for Mary's last blessing on her husband was heartfelt, was sincere; and who shall say that God answered not her prayer?

It has been well said that Mary's enemies, in their eagerness to poison our minds against her, have, in their too great eagerness, administered the over-dose. It is vomited forth—it cannot be retained.

A charge, then, so monstrous, so at variance with all experience of the human mind, must not be supported by any doubtful testimony. The depositions of murderers under pain of torture can have no weight here. It is a charge without a parallel. Let the proof of it be without a flaw.

Now hear the principal evidence upon which Mary Stuart is charged with the murder of Henry, Lord Darnley. It will be necessary, for a moment, to anticipate history. It is said that on the queen's imprisonment in Lochleven, Bothwell sent one of

his servants, by name Dagleish, to Sir James <sup>1567</sup> Balfour, the keeper of Edinburgh Castle, to recover a small silver casket which he had left behind him there. We are told that Sir James delivered the casket, but at the same time gave warning to certain of the barons that Dagleish was in possession of some important documents belonging to Bothwell; that upon this, Dagleish was seized and made to deliver up the casket, which was found to contain certain letters and sonnets, purporting to be addressed by Mary to Bothwell. Both the letters and sonnets were, it is alleged, in the handwriting of Mary, and the former deeply criminated her with respect to Darnley's murder.

Now this story sounds very improbable. For be it considered that letters of such value to Bothwell would not be likely to be left behind by him. On the contrary, this casket would undoubtedly have been his especial care, and would not probably have been left about at all. But Bishop Leslie tells us that Dagleish, when he came to die, made a solemn declaration that no casket or letters were ever committed to him.

1567 It is not my purpose, here, to make a critical examination into the authenticity of these documents. The space will not permit me to do so; and I should but be doing what has already been done sufficiently well and often. <sup>1</sup> They contain many internal evidences of forgery; one, notably, which I shall presently refer to. | Dr. Samuel Johnson, among many other eminent critics, has pronounced these casket letters to be most unmistakable forgeries; but I shall now quote the testimony of a more modern writer. Mr. Mandell Creighton, in his "Age of Elizabeth," published in 1882, speaking of the contents of the casket, says: "If these letters were genuine they would establish the depth of Mary's guilt and infamy. But the balance of evidence at present seems to tend to the conclusion that they were forgeries. There were motives enough why such letters should have been forged by those who wanted some convincing proofs of the suspicions which they, perhaps justly, entertained." These are the words of an historian who, it will be seen, is inclined to believe in Mary's guilt. | As such they are trebly valuable.

Now, it is a remarkable circumstance that the <sup>1567</sup> first of the casket letters recounts the meeting of Mary and Darnley, when she came to visit him at Glasgow, in almost exactly the same words as it is told in the deposition of Thomas Crawford. That that deposition is false on the very face of it, I think I have already shown. Yet Mary Stuart, in this casket letter, narrates the conversation which took place between her husband and herself well-nigh in the precise terms as it is given by Crawford ! This is important, for it points to Crawford as the author of the casket letters.

But let us go on to consider what further evidence is brought against Mary to convict her of Darnley's murder. The queen, while her husband was lodged in the Kirk of Field, slept in a room immediately under his. We are told that Bothwell had given orders to his servant, Nicolas Hubert, that Mary Stuart's bed should not be placed directly beneath the king's, for he wished the powder to be strewed on that spot ; that Hubert had neglected his master's injunction ; that the bed was put exactly where it should not have

1567 been ; that the queen, on coming into the room, angrily ordered Hubert to change its position. " This," says Mignet, " if true, is of itself sufficient to place Mary's complicity beyond doubt." But the story scarcely commends itself as true. What is the authority for it? A deposition made by Nicolas Hubert himself, when on his trial for being concerned in the king's murder. This man, usually known as Paris, from the place of his birth, was an old servant of Bothwell's. Two years after the murder he was tried and hanged as one of the accomplices. These are the words of the deposition he is said to have made : " The queen said to me, ' Fool that you are, I will not have my bed in that place,' and so made me remove it ; by which words I perceived in my mind that she was aware of the plot. Thereupon I took the courage to say to her, ' Madam, my Lord Bothwell has commanded me to take to him the keys of your chamber, because he intends to do something in it ; namely, to blow up the king with gunpowder.' ' Do not talk about that at this hour,' said she, ' but do what you please.'



Upon this I did not venture to say anything <sup>1567</sup>  
more."

Now, I will not insist, as I might do, that this is the evidence of a murderer, afterwards hanged for his crime ; I will not insist that it is evidence extorted by persons to whom it was a supreme need to obtain such evidence ; but I will take the words themselves and show that they prove their own falsehood. "Fool that you are." Whatever were Mary Stuart's faults, vulgarity was never one of them. "'I will not have my bed in that place ;' by which words I perceived in my mind that she was aware of the plot." He had not, then, previously known that she was aware of the plot ; for he goes on to say : "*Thereupon* I took the courage to say to her, 'Madam, my Lord Bothwell has commanded me to take to him the keys of your chamber, because he intends to do something in it ; namely, to blow up the king with gunpowder.'" Whoever the inventors of this story may have been, they can scarcely be regarded as skilled in their work. Can anything be more improbable than this ; that Paris, intrusted by his master with

1567 a matter of life and death to all concerned, should suddenly divulge to the queen a terrible secret, of which, the moment before, he had thought she might have no knowledge? Is it a possible tale that this man, the trusted agent of murderers, should be ready to imperil all simply because he is told to change the position of a bed? But he took courage to say: "He has commanded me to take to him the keys of your chamber; for he intends to blow up the king with gunpowder." And we are told that these are words used by an underling to the Queen of Scotland; spoken concerning her husband, the king; spoken without authority from any one; spoken because he gathers from a trivial mandate that she is already aware of the plot! We must have stronger evidence than this. I will again quote from that historian who is probably the most able of Mary Stuart's accusers. He says, "Her conduct, when the time for the murder drew near, is but too well calculated to confirm the accusations which result from the depositions of the witnesses, the confessions of the perpetrators, and her own letters. Nelson says that she caused

a bed of new velvet to be removed from the king's <sup>1567</sup> apartment, and substituted an old one in its place. Paris declares that she also removed from her own chamber a rich coverlet of fur, which she was doubtless desirous not to leave there on the evening of the explosion." In reply to this, I have only to say, that what might be evidence on some minor charge ceases to be so on so capital a crime as that of which Mary Stuart is accused. It is surely trifling here to talk of coverlets and fur!

Now, I must again anticipate history, that I may quote two circumstances of very great significance. When Queen Elizabeth's commissioners for the last spoliation of Mary Stuart, at Chartley, robbed her of all her treasured relics, it was discovered that amongst miniatures and portraits of her first husband, Francis II., she had preserved several miniatures of Darnley. One of these was enclosed in a folding frame, together with a portrait of herself, and one of their son between them.\* She had not preserved the smallest token from Bothwell or any portrait of him. Neither then, nor

\* Strickland.

1567 at any time before, were letters of his found in her keeping which might give colour to the charge against her of having written the casket epistles.

But what follows has even greater force. About the year 1850, a letter was found among Cecil's papers, written by the hand of Lady Lennox, Darnley's mother, and addressed to Mary Stuart. At the heading is put :—

“Margaret, Countess of Lennox, to Mary Queen of Scots, November, 1575.”

Here is an extract from that letter: “I beseech your Majesty fear not, but trust in God that all shall be well. The treachery of your traitors is known better than before. I shall always play my part to your Majesty's content, willing God, so as may tend to both our comforts.”

This letter of the Countess of Lennox is most affectionate throughout. The original, which is in the State Paper Office, is endorsed :—

“My Lady's Grace, the Countess of Lennox, to the Queen of Scots.”

The endorsement is in the hand of Thomas Phillips,

Cecil's spy-decipherer.\* The letter was therefore 1567 probably intercepted by Elizabeth.

This needs no comment. Be it only remembered that the mother of him whom Mary Stuart is accused of having murdered, thus writes to her daughter-in-law nearly nine years after the murder.

There is one thing else, in this part of the subject, that I wish to refer to. Chalmers tells us, in his "Life of Mary, Queen of Scots," that in Sinclair's manuscript history of Scotland, written at the time, and which was in the Scots' College at Paris until a recent date, there occurred this passage: "Bothwell, at his death, and several times before, declared on his oath that he himself committed the murder by the counsels of Moray and Morton, and that the queen was altogether innocent and knew nothing of the murder." It will be remembered that Bothwell died in Denmark, having been made a prisoner in that country by the king. Now, in a letter to the Archbishop of Glasgow, dated the 6th of January, 1577, Mary Stuart refers to this declaration of Bothwell, and

\* Strickland.

1567 says that the King of Denmark had sent it to Queen Elizabeth, but that she had secretly suppressed it. Moreover, we learn from a letter of Sir John Forster to Secretary Walsingham, that when the Earl of Morton came to be tried for participation in Darnley's murder, this declaration of Bothwell was given in evidence against him. If it was evidence against Morton it was also evidence to clear the Queen of Scots.

I have now to enter upon that portion of the life of Mary Stuart by which those who believe in her high virtue and integrity will find their faith the most severely tried. Many are there who, when they read this chapter in her history and would fain believe her innocent, are yet not wholly able, but who find the alternative of her guilt harder to credit still. Well does Strickland say: "The traditional belief in Mary Stuart's innocence which has lingered for nearly three centuries in the hearts and homes of Scotland, from the castle to the humblest cot, where oral chroniclers have repeated her tragic story from generation to generation, proves how strongly the power of moral evidence,

and the victorious influence of truth—truth felt, <sup>1567</sup>  
not fully seen—have wrestled with the lying spirit  
of political defamation, and kept alive the interest  
involved in the controversy, till the perjuries of  
her calumniators should, in the fulness of time, be  
made manifest.”

“*Truth felt, not fully seen.*” It may be even so.  
But when I remember Mary’s dying words, spoken  
from the scaffold at Fotheringay, telling of her  
humble faith that she should one day be cleared,  
then I cannot think but that that faith will at last  
be justified. And when, glancing backward into  
time, I seem to see the grey twilight of that  
February morn, and the great hall of the castle,  
and the assembled crowd, and the raised platform,  
and the block ; and when I see the hapless Mary  
kneeling there, breathing forgiveness to her ene-  
mies, and blessing them that did despitefully use  
her ; when I see her, the eyes bound, waiting for  
the blow, praying aloud, “ O Lord, in Thee have I  
trusted : let me never be put to confusion,”—then,  
though tenfold blacker were the page, I would hold  
her guiltless still.

1567 But Mary's accusers, failing to establish their case by direct evidence, argue that she is convicted of being accessory to Darnley's murder by her conduct after the event. Let us, then, go on to examine the arguments which are urged against her. "What," asks Mignet, "was the effect produced upon Mary Stuart by this terrible occurrence which filled Edinburgh with indignation and mistrust? She appeared overwhelmed with sorrow, and fell into a state of silent dejection. She manifested none of that activity, anger, resolution, and courage which she had displayed after Rizzio's murder; but shut herself up in her room, and would communicate with her most faithful servants by the medium of Bothwell alone. Darnley's murderer was the only person admitted to her presence." Now, that Mary Stuart manifested none of the activity and resolution which she had displayed on the murder of Rizzio, is undoubtedly true; but is this seriously brought as an argument against her? Surely not; for it makes most powerfully upon the other side. The assassination of Rizzio was an insult and an outrage; the murder



of Darnley was a crushing blow. By the one <sup>1567</sup> she was roused to take vengeance upon the dastardly authors ; by the other she was overwhelmed, confounded, amazed. It is the lesser smart which provokes to anger ; the deep wound is felt with silence or a groan.

Again, as to the charge that she would communicate with her most tried servants by the medium of Bothwell alone ; that Darnley's murderer was the only person admitted to her presence, we may well accept this with caution, since it principally rests upon the deposition of Paris. But even if it be true, what does it mean ? I submit that there is no trustworthy evidence to show that Mary Stuart in the least suspected Bothwell of the assassination in the Kirk of Field. On the contrary, there was every reason why she should attribute it to others rather than to him. As I have said, Bothwell had been ever distinguished by his loyalty to the Crown. He had but recently given fresh proof of that loyalty by rendering important services in the borderland. He had had no part at all in the murder of Rizzio, and had therefore

1567 no grudge against the king. There was no reason why Mary's suspicion should have fallen upon him. But, on the other hand, knowing well the temper of her barons towards Darnley, knowing well the cause which had been given them for their anger, she would at once know that he had been sacrificed for his betrayal of them to her. Bothwell, indeed, alone of all the court, seemed the one baron in whom she might confide; and surrounded on all hands by peril as she was, it was natural that she should have turned to his strong arm for aid. Nor must it be forgotten that Bothwell, as I have already indicated, was a tool in the hands of his more astute accomplices. These barons, foremost among whom was the Earl of Morton, had set before them the twofold object of revenging themselves upon Darnley, and of driving Mary Stuart from the throne. There is strong evidence to show that from the first they had planned that Bothwell should do the murder, that he should subsequently marry the queen, and that then, by the raising of popular indignation against her, the latter should be brought under their power, and deprived of the

sovereignty. The story will unfold itself. What <sup>1567</sup>  
wonder, then, such being the web of intrigue in  
which Mary was entangled—what wonder if, that  
she might be discredited, it were so contrived  
that she should “communicate with her most faith-  
ful servants by the medium of Bothwell alone”?

Nor is it surprising that the queen’s confidence  
in Bothwell continued unshaken. Whilst, on the  
one hand, Mary’s enemies secretly spread the  
report that that baron was the perpetrator of  
the king’s murder, on the other, they were careful  
that the queen herself should not suspect him.  
This will enable us to understand the course which  
affairs took after the assassination.

On the 12th of February (the murder had been  
committed on the 10th) Mary caused a reward  
of two thousand pounds to be offered for informa-  
tion that might lead to the detection of the  
assassins. On the next night a paper was affixed  
to the door of the Tolbooth, in which Bothwell  
and two others were accused of being the authors  
of the deed. But the queen, we are told, “took  
no steps to secure the inferior conspirators, and

1567 kept the greatest criminal of them all by her side."

Now, we shall see that Bothwell's accomplices in the murder (among whom were the most powerful barons of the realm) not only shielded him from the queen's suspicion, but continued to support him in every way until his marriage with Mary had been effected. We shall see that they then threw off the mask, and denounced him as the king's murderer, thus striking their long meditated blow at the queen.

Mary now left Edinburgh for a while, and came to the residence of Lord Seton. She was attended here by Bothwell, Huntly, Argyll, the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, and Lethington. Now, all these men had been concerned in the late assassination. Is there no meaning in their thus keeping close to the side of Mary? The scheming Lethington has but half accomplished his ends. Mary Stuart is not yet in the snare.

It has been said, and often repeated, that the queen passed her time at Seton Castle in unseemly gaiety; that she and Bothwell would shoot at the butts against Seton and Huntly, and that on one

occasion, when the latter were beaten, that she <sup>1567</sup> made them pay a forfeit by giving a banquet to her at Tranent. It is very observable that all the evidence which is brought against Mary with respect to Darnley's murder (if we set aside the testimony of the casket, which is rejected even by adverse historians), is entirely of a suppositional character. She was known to have been on terms the reverse of cordial with Darnley; therefore it is easily conceivable that she should have murdered him. She was known to favour the Earl of Bothwell, and to put great trust in him; therefore it is plain that she had conceived an ungovernable passion for him, to which she would make any sacrifice. Within a short time of her husband's death she manifested unseasonable gaiety. What greater proof that she was accessory to his murder?

It is thus that her enemies reason. But with regard to this story of her shooting at the butts with Bothwell—does it look like truth, or has it the aspect of fiction? When we reflect by whom Mary was surrounded at Seton Castle—to wit,

1567 the fellow conspirators of Bothwell—it will not be difficult to understand how such stories became circulated. It seems to me that the tale is a mere fiction ; but, whether it be false or true, I submit that it cannot be brought in evidence against her. For, if we are to believe that Mary thus passed her time in feasting and pleasure within two weeks of her husband's death, is it not an easier matter to credit it on the supposition that she was innocent, than if we suppose her mind burdened with the awful guilt of murder ? If she took refuge in gaiety to drown the accusations of conscience, then she was vulnerable to its pangs ; and this is at variance with what Mr. Froude tells us : viz. that on the morning after the murder she was “breakfasting in bed, eating composedly a new-laid egg.”

In the meantime the belief daily gained strength in Edinburgh that Bothwell had been the murderer of the king, and placards hinting this were secretly posted in the city. Bothwell, greatly enraged, rode into Edinburgh with an armed band, and publicly swore that if he could discover who were

the authors of the placards he would wash his hands in their blood. 1567

On the 20th of February the Earl of Lennox wrote to entreat Mary Stuart that she would take all the steps in her power to bring the murderers of his son to justice. The queen replied to him on the following day, telling him that she had already summoned parliament for that purpose. But the estates did not meet until Easter. On the 26th of February, Lord Lennox again wrote to her, and besought that she would order the arrest of certain persons denounced in the placards. Mary replied that the placards were at variance one with the other, and that she was at a loss what course to pursue, but added that if there were any persons mentioned in the placards whom Lennox might deem worthy to suffer trial, that such persons should be brought before the courts. The earl then wrote to demand that Bothwell should be tried, as being one of the persons mentioned in the placards ; but this request was not granted until April the 12th. In the meantime Mary Stuart had invested Lord Bothwell with

1567 the command of Edinburgh Castle, and had conferred upon him the Castle of Blackness, the Inch, and the Superiority of Leith.\* He continued to rise daily in the queen's favour, notwithstanding the outcry which had been raised against him, as being the author of the outrage in the Kirk of Field.

On the 12th of April Bothwell was tried for the king's murder before a jury of barons, consisting chiefly of his partisans. The court was presided over by his fellow conspirator, the Earl of Argyll, and was overawed by four thousand of Bothwell's armed adherents, who were gathered in the streets of Edinburgh. The earl was, of course, acquitted. He then offered to maintain his innocence by arms, against any gentleman who should still accuse him of the murder.

Now, it is these circumstances, and the fact that the queen, after his trial, continued to confer still greater honours upon Bothwell, that are alleged to cast so dark a shade on the character of Mary Stuart; and it were affectation to deny that this

\* Mignet.



part of her history is supremely hard to defend. <sup>1567</sup>  
The delay with regard to the trial cannot be excused ; but at the same time we must bear in mind that, as I have formerly urged, there is no credible evidence to show that Mary Stuart had the smallest suspicion as to who was the real murderer of her husband. Her trust in Bothwell was great ; and we may be well assured that those surrounding her were careful to humour her confidence. Again, when we recall the fact that the queen, her spirit broken by the many troubles and disasters which had overwhelmed her, was encompassed on all sides, and not least in her council chamber, by a band of lawless men bound together in a dark conspiracy against her, can we think that she was really a free agent at this time ? Those nobles who were her advisers doubtless suggested that Bothwell was deeply wronged by the accusations against him, but that, to satisfy a turbulent section, it were well that the formality of a trial should be gone through. It was but natural that Mary, in the depressed state in which she now was, should be glad to lean, more than was her wont, on the

1567 counsels of those who seemed so obsequiously anxious to serve her. The favours which she conferred on Bothwell—her apparent disinclination that he should incur a trial, might be strong evidence upon a lesser charge; but to prove her guilty of a course of iniquity to which Christendom can scarce afford a parallel, it is weak indeed. It is this one theme that Mary's enemies ever harp upon—her uncontrollable love for the Earl of Bothwell; for they perceive that their charges against her are so monstrous, so utterly incompatible with her known character, that some such unexampled passion must be supposed, to give even the semblance of truth to that on which the judgment of psychologists must ever be, *Fieri non potest*.

But the simple narrative of what followed will, I am sure, convince the unprejudiced reader that Mary's love for Bothwell is a pure fiction, and as unworthy of credence as the alleged intrigue with Rizzio.

Now, on the 19th of April, Bothwell, we are told, invited the Earls Morton, Argyll, Huntly, and a large number of the chief nobility, to take

supper with him at a tavern in Edinburgh, kept <sup>1567</sup>  
by one Ansley. We are told that during the feast Bothwell caused the house to be surrounded by two hundred men-at-arms, for the purpose of overawing the guests ; that he then rose, and told the assembled noblemen that the queen had consented to marry him ; that he terrified this numerous company of lords into signing a bond by which they declared their conviction of his innocence of Darnley's murder, and recommended him as a husband for the queen. In this bond the nobles further pledged themselves to maintain Bothwell's pretensions to the hand of the queen with their lives, declaring themselves infamous traitors should they fail to perform their promise.

Of all the stories put forward to criminate Mary Stuart, surely this is the most incredible. Consider, for a moment, what it is we are asked to believe : That some thirty or upwards of the chief nobles of Scotland, all anxious for the honour of their sovereign—this is the assertion—were intimidated into an act of unprecedented infamy. In modern times such a thing might be less incredible ; but

1567 be it remembered that each one of those nobles carried his sword. Can it be supposed that such men as Morton, Argyll, Huntly, Glencairn, would have thus, without a struggle, submitted, like beaten curs, to such intolerable humbling? Is it not impossible to think that Bothwell could for a moment have contemplated using violence towards half the nobility of the land? Could he, for an instant, have intended imprisonment or slaughter for thirty powerful barons? Is it not more impossible still, to suppose that those two hundred hirelings would have dared to raise a finger against such a company? Why, this was at a time when Bothwell was execrated throughout the city—when all cursed him as the murderer of the king. What band of Scotsmen, then, was at his call, that would be willing to lay hands on half the nobles of the realm?

That such a bond was signed by the nobles is matter of history, and we shall see to what use Bothwell put the document. The bond, then, was signed by the barons of their own free-will—signed to consummate the plot which they had long been

labouring. What followed? Hear the words of <sup>1567</sup> Mignet : “Immediately after the famous supper at Ansley’s tavern on the 19th of April, the principal nobles whom Bothwell had forced to subscribe to his propositions, entered into a secret league to oppose him.” But that secret league, I have endeavoured to show, existed long before. Bothwell, from the first, had been the tool and the dupe of men craftier than he.

On the 21st of April, the queen went to visit her infant son at Stirling Castle. She stayed there three days, and on the 24th she set out to return to Edinburgh. When she was nearing the capital, she and her escort were suddenly surrounded by a troop of six hundred horsemen, under the command of the Lord Bothwell. The earl, riding up to the queen, seized her horse’s bridle, and hurried her away with him to his Castle of Dunbar, where she and her suite became his prisoners.

Now Mary’s enemies declare that this seizure of her person by Bothwell had been all pre-arranged between herself and the earl, some time before ; that the capture was simulated, and that she was,

1567 in reality, a most willing prisoner. How do they support this charge? By the evidence of certain of the casket letters, which, if genuine, are conclusive testimony. But we have seen that even historians who are adverse to Mary, reject these letters as forgeries. The story, therefore, cannot be received; and it is a significant fact, as we learn from the Inedited Border Correspondence in the State Paper Office, that this plot to carry off Mary to Dunbar, as also the plot to murder Rizzio in the queen's presence, was known beforehand to the English authorities at Berwick, and had been by them communicated to Cecil. Moreover, an act of the first parliament of James VI. declares that "after detaining Queen Mary's most noble person by force and violence twelve days or thereabouts at Dunbar Castle, Bothwell compelled her by fear, under circumstances such as might befall the most courageous woman in the world, to promise that she would, as soon as possible, contract marriage with him: all which things were plotted and planned by the said earl and the persons aforesaid of long time before; even before their

foresaid conspiracy and parricide" (murder of 1567  
Darnley).

And again (having reference to the divorce afterwards obtained by Mary from Bothwell), here is an extract from a document among the secret archives of the Vatican, entitled, "Instructions given by Marie Stuart to Robert Radolfi, sent to the Pope." "Tell his holiness," she writes to Radolfi, "the grief we suffered when we were made prisoner by one of our subjects, the Earl of Bothwell, and led as prisoner, with the Earl of Huntly, the chancellor, and the nobleman, our secretary, together to the Castle of Dunbar, and, after, to the Castle of Edinburgh, where we were detained, against our will, in the hands of the said Earl of Bothwell, until such time as he had procured a pretended divorce between him and the sister of the said Lord of Huntly, his wife, our near relative, and we were constrained to yield our consent, yet against our will, to him. Therefore, his holiness is supplicated to take order on this, that we are made quit of the said indignity by means of a process at Rome, and commission sent to

1567 Scotland to the bishops and other Catholic judges,  
as to his holiness seemeth best."

I have two things to say with regard to these instructions; viz. to point out the exceeding improbability that Mary, a zealous Catholic, should have thus written to the Pope if her words were deliberately false—that she should so have perjured herself to the supreme head of her Church. And then, I would call attention to the fact, that it is in this manner she speaks, not only to the Pope, but to the world, of the man for whom we are told she sacrificed everything—honour, power, self-respect, the good opinion of her friends; for whom she incurred eternal infamy, and polluted her soul with the everlasting stain of blood; and of whom she is declared to have said, that "she cared not to lose France, England, and her own country for him, and shall go with him to the world's end in a white petticoat, before she leave him."\* We shall see, however, that on the very first occasion that offered itself, she did leave him, and that within less than two months of the date on which we are told she used these words.

\* Grange to Bedfond, April 20th, 1567.



Now, previous to his seizure of the queen, Both-<sup>1567</sup>well had urged his suit to her in vain. She was astonished to discover that he had entertained any such mind with regard to herself. Finding that he could not persuade her, he took the ruffianly course which I have narrated. As to what happened during the ten or twelve days that Mary was held prisoner at Dunbar, we only know that Bothwell, with alternate threats and entreaties, renewed his suit to the queen ; that being still unsuccessful, he produced the bond signed at the tavern, and displayed it before the eyes of Mary. The latter was amazed at what she saw, and began to think that since all her chief nobility were thus anxious that she should marry Lord Bothwell, that it might be her duty to accede to their wishes. Her consent, in whatever manner, was at last obtained. Whether it was given from these considerations alone, or whether, as some have supposed, this ruffian made such use of his power as seemed to leave Mary no alternative but to marry him, we cannot certainly say. But let it never be urged that she gave her consent to wed Lord Darnley's

1567 murderer, for in this same bond that Bothwell showed her, they, the undersigned barons, declared that although "the noble and mighty Lord James, Earl of Bothwell, had been calumniated by placards privily affixed on the public places, and otherwise slandered by his evil willers and privy enemies, as doer of the heinous murder of the king, her Majesty's late husband, that he, the said Earl of Bothwell, was innocent and guiltless of the foresaid odious crime objected to him, and acquitted conformably to the laws of this realm."

But this part of Mary Stuart's history is so painful both to read and to narrate, that, having, as I believe, put forward such considerations as must clear her, in the minds of impartial persons, of the awful charges brought against her, I shall pass over the record of the succeeding weeks as briefly as may be. But before going on with the narrative, there are yet two things that I wish to notice here. First, then, it has been often asserted that Mary, immediately after her escape from Lochleven, sent a messenger to Bothwell to tell him she was free. It is strange how all such little

items of evidence needed to prove this ever-insisted- 1567  
on passion for Bothwell, are forthcoming. There is, however, no very credible authority for this statement against Mary, and it is probably apiece with the many calumnies uttered against her. From whom could such an assertion have emanated? Assuredly only from her enemies; for had it been matter of fact, and any of her friends had known of it, they would have studiously kept it from view. But if Mary Stuart had really sent messages to Bothwell, it is not to be supposed that she would have done so other than most secretly; aware, as she must have been, how greatly the knowledge of such action on her part would discredit her in the eyes of even her most zealous adherents. But this is spoken of, not as a fact that subsequently eked out, but that was known at the time; and, therefore, if Mary did communicate with Bothwell, she must have done so openly, and done what of all things else was most calculated to alienate from her her supporters; and this when she was on the eve of a great battle, the issue of which was to decide her destiny. The story is so improbable

1567 that, until it is attested by the most unimpeachable evidence, it cannot be entertained.

Again, it has been hinted that so great was the depth of Mary's moral degradation that she even was willing to connive at a purpose of Bothwell to get possession of her infant son, James, with a view to putting him out of the way—to lose or murder him. It is as well that the traducers of Mary Stuart fill up the cup of her condemnation, for so the harder becomes their task to win credit for their charges. Now, we know, from a letter of Drury to Cecil, that Mary, shortly before her marriage with Bothwell, had secretly sent her faithful servant, Lesley, Bishop of Ross, to Stirling, with strict injunctions to the Earl of Mar (in whose custody the child was), not to deliver her son into any hands but her own. Notwithstanding this, Mar afterwards joined the rebel lords, alleging as his justification that the person of James was in danger from the queen.\*

On the 3rd of May, Bothwell, who was now divorced from his wife, the Lady Jane Gordon,

\* Strickland.

brought the queen back to Edinburgh. She was <sup>1567</sup> still guarded closely, and Buchanan gives us the following somewhat remarkable account of this journey back from Dunbar. He says: "Bothwell gathered his friends and dependants together, resolving to bring back the queen to Edinburgh, that so, *under a vain show of her liberty*, he might determine of their marriage at his pleasure. His attendants were all armed, and as they were on their journey a fear seized on many of them, lest, one time or other, *it might turn to their prejudice to hold the queen still a prisoner*. Upon this scruple they threw away all their spears, and so, in a *seeming* more peaceable posture, they brought her to the Castle of Edinburgh, which was then in Bothwell's power."

Now, this account is remarkable, as coming from Buchanan, who is one of Mary Stuart's most bitter accusers. And he has just told us before, that she "was carried to Dunbar by her own contrivance, and was well-pleased to remain." Hence, it would seem that, in the passage I have quoted, he unwittingly bears testimony to the truth; viz.

1567 that Mary was really a prisoner in the hands of Bothwell, and not a pretended one.\* Such was evidently the belief of the soldiers.

The announcement that the queen was about to marry Bothwell aroused great indignation in the city. The Presbyterian minister, Craig, who had received orders to publish the banns of the marriage, refused to comply, declaring his conviction that the queen was held captive by Bothwell, according to common report. Now, this is very important, as it shows what the belief of the people was with regard to this matter. They felt that their queen could not be free. But the scruples of Craig were overcome, as, by some means or other, a letter was produced from Mary herself, authorizing the banns. When her consent was finally wrung from her we cannot tell; but probably not until within a few days of the performance of the ceremony.

The marriage took place on the 15th of May, at four o'clock in the morning. The rites were performed in the Chapel Royal at Holyrood.

\* Strickland, I believe, first called attention to this passage from Buchanan.

Now, does Mary's demeanour immediately after <sup>1567</sup> the marriage tend to the belief that she had espoused the man whom she passionately loved, or does it show that she had been forced by some villainous conspiracy into a union that was loathsome to her? Let the reader judge. This is the testimony of the French ambassador, Du Croc. Writing to Catherine de Medici and Charles IX., he says: "On Thursday (May 15th, the day of the marriage) her Majesty sent for me to inquire whether I had perceived any strangeness between her and her husband; which she wished to excuse to me, saying that if I saw she was sorrowful, it was because she would not rejoice, as, she says, she never will again, and desires only death. Yesterday (May 16th), being in a closet with the Earl of Bothwell, she called out aloud for some one to give her a knife that she might kill herself. Those who were in the adjoining room heard her. They think that unless God aids her she will fall into despair."

But her love for Bothwell had turned into hate, as violent love sometimes will? Her enemies

1567 cannot urge this, as they tell us that long afterwards, she continued to profess the most passionate devotion to him.

But this unhappiness of the queen, even on her wedding day, may perhaps be accounted for in some other manner? Hear the explanation: "Bothwell, doubtless afraid that she would as soon become disgusted with him as she had with Darnley, tortured her heart in order to occupy it, and rendered her unhappy that he might prevent her from being inconstant." This is ingenious, but not probable. The blundering Bothwell was scarcely so skilled in moral tactics.

As soon as the marriage between Mary Stuart and Bothwell had been consummated, the barons displayed their true colours. They entered into a numerous and powerful confederation against the Crown, and used every effort to obtain the countenance of Elizabeth to their proceedings. Elizabeth was perplexed, and knew not what course to pursue. Her natural inclinations prompted her to favour the barons; but, on the other hand, she was deterred from doing



this by the reflection of how great a danger <sup>1567</sup> to monarchical government might thereby arise. She ended by a compromise, and while secretly conniving at, if she did not favour, the actions of the rebels, she openly condemned their breach of allegiance.

Shortly after his marriage, Bothwell, taking with him the queen, whom he continued most studiously to surround with his creatures, retired to Borthwick Castle, situated about ten miles from Edinburgh. The barons, having collected about two thousand horsemen, prepared to besiege them in this stronghold. Lord Hume, on the 11th of June, came up before the castle with eight hundred men, and began to surround it. But Bothwell having been apprised of his approach, fled precipitately, leaving the queen behind him in the castle. Many hours later, when the night had come on, and Hume and his men had encamped before the walls, Mary, disguised in man's apparel, booted and spurred, made her escape on horseback. But the country around being wild and trackless, she appears to have lost her way, and

1567 to have wandered all night about the same spot ;  
for when morning broke she was still in the vicinity  
of the castle. At this point, unhappily, she fell in  
with Bothwell, who carried her off with him to  
Dunbar.

Now Mary's accusers give a different version  
of this story. They say that before Bothwell fled  
from Borthwick, he made an appointment with the  
queen that she was to follow him when night came,  
and to meet him—just as she in fact did—at some  
little distance from the walls of the castle. Now,  
this is, to say the least, a very unlikely story. For  
if the queen were capable of escaping alone, in the  
manner she did, why did not Bothwell take her  
with him ? Why leave her with the very uncertain  
chance of her being able to keep any appointment  
with him, seeing that the castle was invested by  
foes, and that the country around was trackless, and  
it was night ? Is it not much more reasonable to  
suppose that Mary had refused to flee with Both-  
well ; that in the precipitancy of his flight he had  
been unable to drag her with him, and thus had  
been compelled to leave her behind ? Is it not

plain that this poor queen, thus, in the dead of night, <sup>1567</sup> made a desperate effort to flee from the clutches of this miserable ruffian? that she hoped that she might perchance make her way to some loyal baron who would protect and succour her in her great need?

But let us pass on. The insurgents, finding that both Bothwell and the queen had escaped them, fell back on Edinburgh, where they were reinforced by a thousand men. In the meantime, Bothwell, having come to Dunbar, caused a proclamation to be issued in the queen's name, summoning all faithful subjects of her Majesty to arms. An army of two thousand five hundred men was got together in two days, and Bothwell, accompanied by the queen, marched against the rebels, and coming to Carberry Hill, six miles from Edinburgh, he encamped on the eastern side of it. The rebel lords came forth from Edinburgh to meet him, and took up their position on the heights of Musselburgh, some mile or more from the position of the queen. It was on June the 15th that the two armies sat thus facing each other. And now the French ambassador, Du Croc, made

1567 an attempt at mediation. The rebels empowered him to offer these terms to the queen: "That they were ready, if she would separate herself from 'the wretch who held her captive,' to acknowledge her sway, and serve her as her obedient subjects."\* To these terms Mary agreed, and the Laird of Grange, respectfully taking her horse by the bridle, led her into the midst of the confederates. "My lords," said she, addressing them, "I am come to you, not out of any fear I had of my life, nor yet doubting of the victory if matters had gone to the worst; but I abhor the shedding of Christian blood, especially of those who are my own subjects; and therefore I yield to you, and will be ruled hereafter by your counsels, trusting you will respect me as your born princess and queen."

We thus see that on the very first opportunity that offered itself, Mary Stuart abandoned Bothwell to his fate, choosing rather to place herself at the mercy of her rebellious barons than to remain any longer in that tyrant's power. I well know that I shall be told this separation from Bothwell cost her

\* Mignet.

many pangs—that she had declined an alternative <sup>1567</sup>  
proposition of Du Croc that the conflict between the  
two armies should be decided by a personal encounter between Bothwell and a champion from the other side ; but I submit that the fact remains that she thus voluntarily separated herself from this man when she must have known that it was well-nigh impossible that she should ever see him again, unless it were as a prisoner in the hands of her lords.

The barons at first, when the queen came among them, showed her all deference ; but their demeanour very quickly changed. They brought her into Edinburgh at ten o'clock in the evening, and, as they entered the city, they caused a banner to be displayed before her, on which was painted the body of the murdered Darnley, together with a representation of her infant son ; and, underneath, the words, “ Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord ! ” She was received with yells and execrations by the people. Unhappy Mary ! They took her to the provost's house, and compelled her to pass the night alone, a fast prisoner in one of the rooms

1567 overlooking the street. We are told that during the night she would frequently open the window and call aloud for help ; but when morning came, the brutal soldiery, in answer to her cry, with fiendish mockery displayed before her that hideous banner. O Scotland, you may well think tenderly of your princess now !

“ Never more on her  
Shall sorrow light, or shame.”

On the next day, the barons brought her to Holyrood Palace, and, having deliberated together, they decided that she should be imprisoned in Lochleven Castle, and placed in the custody of the laird, Sir William Douglas. Accordingly, on the 17th of June, she was taken by night-time from the palace of her fathers, and, under the conduct of the fierce barons, Lindsay and Ruthven, was hurried away to the scene of her long captivity.

And now my task is finished, and in conclusion I would ask those of my readers who may still believe in Mary's guilt, to read once more her “celebrated letter” to Elizabeth, written from Sheffield some four years before her death, and the account of her

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last hours and execution, as impartially given by <sup>1567</sup>  
Tytler. I cannot think that they will then regard  
Mary Stuart as a wicked woman, but rather, in  
the words of Camden, as “a lady of singular piety  
towards God,” and who, being, in her youth, not  
free from faults, was led, as she herself says, by  
her many afflictions and long seclusion, to find  
as her solace that “peace of God which passeth  
all understanding.”

1567 NOTE.—It has been urged against Mary Stuart that when, shortly after she was placed in Lochleven, she was pressed to separate herself from Bothwell by a divorce, she at that time refused to do so. But the explanation of this is not difficult. She believed herself to be pregnant by Bothwell, and she was unwilling to take any step that might prejudice her child. According to some accounts, she was delivered of a daughter whilst at Lochleven, and the child, being sent to France, afterwards became a nun at Notre-Dame de Soissons. But the matter is involved in obscurity.

Again : certain letters from Throckmorton to Elizabeth are brought in evidence against the Queen of Scots. The ambassador writes to his mistress on the 14th of July, 1567, that Mary Stuart “preferred to relinquish her crown and kingdom rather than abandon Bothwell.” But she had already abandoned Bothwell ; and, moreover, it is not difficult to see that Throckmorton was secretly in league with the rebels, to whom it was an absolute necessity to obtain the sanction of Elizabeth to the course they had taken in imprisoning their queen. That sanction could only be obtained by representing that it was dangerous that Mary Stuart should be at large, since she would be sure to ally herself again with Bothwell, and cause the recommencement of civil war.

G. D.



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